

MR. SPEAKER The House will now take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That Clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

MR SPEAKER: The question is:

"That Schedule stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

The Schedule was added to the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That Clause 1. the enacting Formula and the Long Title stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the Minister may move that the Bill be passed.

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Having done so much, I believe we deserve our lunch.

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV (Azamgarh): What other business remains to be done Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: There are two Bills which are to be passed. We will take them up after the recess.

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): Are we having a lunch break?

MR. SPEAKER: After having done so much, we deserve not merely 'lunch', but a 'lunch-hour'. The House stands adjourned for Lunch to reassemble at 3.15 p.m.

14.12 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till Fifteen Minutes past Fifteen of the Clock.

15.20 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Twenty Minutes past Fifteen of the Clock.

(Shri Tara Singh in the Chair)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): Sir, I have a submission to make. The next Bill pertains to Shri Kamal Nath. His Private Secretary has sent information here that because of a bereavement he had to leave Delhi suddenly. I, therefore, would request you to take up the next Bill on the agenda which will be piloted by Shri G. Venkat Swamy.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Does it have the consent of the House?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

15.21 hrs.

COTTON TRANSPORT REPEAL BILL **

As passed by Rajya Sabha.

MR. CHAIRMAN : We shall now take up Item 53 on the Agenda-Cotton Transport Repeal Bill.

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): I beg to move: *

"That the Bill to repeal the Cotton Transport Act, 1923, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Cotton Transport Act, 1923 was enacted on 23rd February, 1923 to provide for restriction and control on transport of cotton to ensure maintenance of purity of superior varieties of staple cotton grown in specified tracts and to prevent its admixture with the inferior varieties. The provisions of this Act have been hampering the timely and free movement of cotton particularly to the spinning mills in recent times in view of the manifold increase in production of cotton, and change in the marketing and consumption factors.

In order to remove regulation on movement of fully-pressed cotton within the industrial zones of the country and to ensure timely movement of cotton to the mills, it is considered necessary that the Act be repealed. The proposed Bill seeks to achieve the aforesaid objectives.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Motion moved:

"That the Bill to repeal the Cotton Transport Act, 1923, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Cotton Transport Repeal Bill, 1994 presented by the Hon. Minister just now appears to be good and very general. However, I am reminded of a couplet of a poet, Bihari which reads as follows :

"Satsaiyan Ke Dohre Jyon Navik Ke Teer,
Dekhan Mein Chhote Lage Ghav Kare Gambhir".

* Moved with the recommendations of the President.

** Published in the Gazette of India, extraordinary Part II, Section 2, dated 30.3.95.

The Hon. Minister has presented a Bill of one or two lines in the House and has said that this Bill has been brought to repeal the law enacted during British rule. But it is a serious issue. Ours is an agricultural country. Whether it is the farmer of Abohar-Fazilka Ganganagar or the farmer from East-West-North and South, wherever cotton is grown, the farmer does not get the price in proportion to his labour. The Hon. Minister has said that the previous law provided imposition of restriction. Sir, the Britishers enacted it for their self-interests. Cotton was grown in India but it used to be supplied to England for manufacturing cloth. Thereafter that cloth used to be sold in India on higher rates. Their target was merely to earn money. I would like to urge upon the Hon. Agriculture Minister, who is present here, to listen to me attentively. The Government declares the support prices of other crops. Likewise, the same should be done in the case of cotton also. Recently, the crop of cotton in our country was affected by pests and on account of it the farmers could not earn as much as they should have. As a result, the cotton which used to be sold at Rs.2200-2300 per quintal could not be sold even at Rs. 2000. This Bill has been brought for its free transportation and it has also been said that its quality will also be maintained so that the quality material reaches the spinning mills. Besides it the interests of the cotton growers should also be kept in mind.

Sometimes, there is large production of cotton but its export is banned. The result is that due to the ban on the export of cotton its stock increases. Thus, our good will in the foreign countries goes down. Recently, the production of cotton was less as it was affected by a disease. On account of it, its export was stopped. Our goodwill in the foreign countries received a setback. Both U.S.A. and Japan tried to blacklist India. My submission is that the cotton growers should not suffer and they should get the suitable remuneration for their crops. Sometimes it is affected by a disease but the pesticides costs more. Otherwise also the crop of cotton is very expensive. My submission is that the insecticides used in it should be made available to the farmers on concessional rates. It should not be stocked in a large quantity and the farmers should get adequate rebate in selling the cotton. We will have to make relentless efforts to maintain the quality and purity of cotton.

Earlier the Britishers had their vested interests in it but now it should not be there. Sometimes, the spinning mills, handlooms and powerlooms gather more stock and do not supply cloth. It is also not good. To what extent the Government want to impose restrictions on the transportation of cotton? Will the farmer be able to sell cotton as per his convenience in the market, to the mills or through the Agricultural Crop Market Society? Further, will the middlemen not cause him loss? All these things will have to be given due consideration.

The policy of liberalisation also applies in it. If, under the new economic policy, the Government wants

to encourage free order it would be a step in the right direction. It will lead to competition but the purity and quality of Indian cotton should be maintained. It has been generally observed that the Government takes arbitrary decisions in the name of handloom and on account of it the cotton growers suffer losses and they do not get the full price of their produce. Many mills of NTC are lying closed, in our country, and as a result thereof the condition of the labourers working in these mills miserable. The Government do not supply cotton to the mills in time. Thus, the mills become sick and the labourers are retrenched. Some times on account of the lockout they are sent back to their homes after obtaining their signatures. The Hon. Minister should assure that the N.T.C. mills and the spinning mills will be supplied cotton in time. The Government should also see that the handlooms and the powerlooms do not face the problem of yarn.

Mr. Chairman Sir, through you, I would also like to submit that in the new economic policy, the Government have kept the option of free trade open. However, recently, the Government cancelled a notification regarding stocking more cotton. Why was it done? As I have said that earlier the price of cotton was Rs. 2200-2300. Now it has fallen down to Rs. 200-300. Who is responsible for this loss?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: Please speak after getting complete details.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: I am speaking after getting full details. Whether it is North or the South, I am speaking for all. The organisations set up for both North and South, have given memoranda to safeguard the interests of the cotton growers. It requires serious consideration so that more and more cotton can be grown. Otherwise if its production falls, we will have to suffer loss in its export since export is the most important part of our trade.

Mr. Chairman Sir, the Cotton Transport Bill which has been brought for amendment was enacted in 1923. I urge upon the Government to repeal the law enacted by the Britishers and through the new law, do away with the control system so that the interests of the cotton growing farmers are safeguarded. With these words, I conclude.

SHRI UMRAO SINGH (Jalandhar): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank the Hon. Minister of Textiles for bringing forward this Bill and would also like to say that it is a good step in the interest of the farmers. This Bill was passed by the British Government in 1923 and it served as their memorial till date. The early it were disposed of, the better it was. However, it is better late than never and I would like to congratulate the Hon. Minister and the Prime Minister for it.

Cotton is our cash crop. Its production is restricted to certain areas where the farmers have to put in a great labour to cultivate it. We are aware that since independence the farmers have been complaining of

not getting adequate remuneration for their crop. For this, the Government had to announce the support price for cotton from time to time in order to help the farmers. The Cotton Corporation was also constituted for the purpose. Just now, Rawatji was saying that cotton used to be sent to Manchester and Lancashire for the purpose of making garments and to be shipped back to India. The craze for cotton is on a boom throughout the world and there is less craze for polyester garments. Thus, the farmer should not only get remunerative prices for the cotton he cultivates but he should be encouraged to grow more cotton in place of other crops so that his income will increase and the country will prosper.

(Interruptions)

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH (Mirzapur) You may call it Kapas or cotton. Our Hon. Minister of Agriculture is present here. I would request him to differentiate between Kapas and cotton.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is not the proper way.

SHRI UMRAO SINGH: If the Hon. Member fails to understand it, I would term it as Kapas. I was saying that it is a very good step in the interest of the farmers. It will be convenient for the cotton mills as also for the traders as they will be able to buy Kapas from the area of their choice. Therefore, I would say that it is a good measure of repealing the legacy of the British.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would also like to say that the Government has accomplished it only partially. This was done because of the ongoing cotton movement but permission has not been granted for the export of cotton. The export of cotton can add to their remuneration and the farmers can reap more benefits. It will also encourage them to grow more cotton. The more the production, the more will be the support price for cotton which will benefit the nation as well as the farmers. Therefore, I would urge upon the Hon. Minister and also the Hon. Minister of Agriculture—because Kapas is grown on a large scale in his area also—to grant permission for the export of cotton in view of the farmers interests. This way, there will be no dearth of cotton in the country. Punjab can meet the demand for seeds, if there is any, for the whole country. On the other hand the production of oilseed, sunflower etc. has also increased.

I would also like to say that pests on cotton cause a great loss to the cotton growers. Many Hon. Members have complained about the damage caused to crops in their areas due to pests. Therefore, it is necessary to take a decision on crop insurance on priority basis so that the farmers are saved from incurring losses. I understand that this scheme cannot be applied to all crops but it is necessary to implement the crop insurance scheme forthright for the cash crops.

I would also like to say that loan facilities should be extended to the farmer on the basis of the stock of crops available with him. The farmer does not get remunerative prices for selling the cotton immediately

after the crop is ready. He also lacks in resources to stock his crop. He has neither godowns nor any other facilities. Therefore, the co-operative and other banks should extend him loan by mortgaging his crop so that he can sell the cotton when its prices are high and earn a good profit.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is true that N.T.C. mills are antiquated ones and there is a need for their modernisation. The farmers will not be able to get full returns unless the by-products of cotton, like the cloth, the yarn is not produced. Therefore, these mills should be modernised and quality cloth should be produced in the country which can also be exported. The archaic machinery of the N.T.C. mills should be replaced with the modern one. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Agricultural Universities of Pantnagar, Punjab and Haryana have done a good job in evolving new varieties of cotton. They have also developed new seeds. This has benefited the farmers because a good quality cotton is bound to sell at good prices and produce a good cloth.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I strongly support the Bill brought to repeal this anti-farmers Bill. In this regard, all the Bills of the British period should be repealed to ensure uniform prices of cotton throughout the country and give benefits to the farmers.

[English]

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Bill, as it stands, of course, is a technical Bill but, to my mind, it raises some very fundamental questions.

Cotton is a subject which not only affects the cotton grower, not only the textile manufacturer or even the weaver, basically it affects the common man because textile is an item of mass consumption. Therefore, when we deal with the subject, in fact, there is a dilemma which we have to resolve as to how to harmonise the interests of the cotton grower with that of the weaver, with that of the mill sector and ultimately with that of the consumer. Frankly, everyone is a consumer of cotton textiles, including, hopefully, those who live below the poverty line - forty percent or fifty percent of the population. If my recollection is right, the per capita consumption of textiles in this country has not gone up since Independence; perhaps it has marginally gone down. That shows how the poor people of the country today are not really in a position to have the minimum access to cotton textiles that they ought to have as human dignity demands. Therefore, this becomes a sharply divisive question in our society as to where do we draw the line. Surely, the cotton grower, in order to have the incentive, must have a remunerative price. If the price tends to fall, there has to be a support mechanism, and that is why the Cotton Corporation of India was created. But then, to carry the argument far enough, to say that there should be complete freedom of export of cotton or ban on in Port that argument does not appeal to me because there we run the risk of

raising the price of cotton to a point where it will become almost inaccessible to the common weaver and, therefore, to the common man. That is where that interest has to be kept in view before we deal with the problem of cotton.

I am not sure, but recently I read a report that there was some sort of a mini scam in cotton, that there was a certain deliberate hoarding of cotton which led to a certain amount of deliberate profiteering and led to a sharp increase in price, which has affected the supply of cotton to the weaver. I do not know how far the information is correct. I would like the Hon. Minister to kindly inform the House about the facts of the case. But surely that is the red signal that we have got to keep in view that we cannot allow total freedom in dealing with cotton. That is to say, while keeping in mind, and fully protecting the interests of the cotton grower, we have got to ensure that it does not take cotton textiles out of the reach of the common man.

There is one question that arises also. After 1933, when this law was enacted—not that I am supporting this law—there must have been a rationale and a reason. I would like the Hon. Minister to tell us as to how that situation has changed which makes the continuance of this law on our Statute Book totally irrational. That is only as a matter of information. But I am fully in favour of treating the whole country as a common market. In fact, many many years ago when I was in America and when Europe was still taking the first steps towards the formation of a common market, I was told by some very top American economists: You have got a built-in advantage of a common market - at that time we had five hundred million people - and you do not take advantage of it. Therefore, I am in favour, particularly in the case of an item of mass consumption, of which the cotton forms the basis, to allow absolutely free movement throughout the country. Therefore, since the Hon. Minister in his introductory remarks used the phrase 'zones', I was a little bit perplexed. Does he envisage dividing the country into certain zones or does he really want to go in for a completely free movement of cotton throughout the country so that the price of cotton attains a certain uniformity?

Some friends here have argued in favour of freedom of export. I would say that we import cotton and we also export cotton because cotton, like steel, is one of those commodities where you cannot really have all varieties and all standards that you need. Some fibers which are in surplus have to be exported and some fibers which are required have to be imported in order to create the proper mix. Therefore, we must maintain a certain amount of governmental control over - not so much on the mechanism of export - the quantity to be exported after a particular season. We must keep in view this primary criterion that the price of cotton should not rise beyond a certain point. I have pointed it out earlier.

There is one more aspect which we have got to

keep in view. There was a time when because of limited technology, cotton mills were located only in some parts of the country. Now whenever you start from the raw material and go to a final product, there is always an economic dilemma : where, at what point would you create the conversion machinery. For example, refinery should be in the oil-field or at the point of consumption or cotton mill in the cotton growing area or in the consumption area? Now in the case of cotton there used to be some climatic factors which, because of the modern technology, are not relevant now. With modernisation, technology has become rather irrelevant and in fact today you can establish a working and viable and a feasible textile mill anywhere, practically anywhere, in the world. I am told, even in the Sahara you can have a textile mill. Therefore, what I am suggesting is this : since it is an item of mass consumption, since India is a vast country, there should be a deliberate Government push towards decentralising or dispersing the cotton textile industry so that it will reduce the price of cotton textiles available to the common consumers in all parts of the country. Where feasible, wherever possible, we should make out an economic balance between cotton that might be grown locally or taken from some nearby part of the country and the textile which has to be sold right in the immediate vicinity of the textile mill. So, some long term economic planning should be done to ensure the availability of cotton textiles on equitable terms to all the people of the country.

So, these are the thoughts that arise in my mind on account of this, Bill. Basically I support the idea of free movement of cotton throughout the country, tempered with a certain assurance for remunerative price for the cotton-grower, as assurance that the weavers- who are in millions in our country- are not deprived of the cotton that they need in order to earn their livelihood and, finally, an assurance for the consumer that he gets the minimum quantity of cotton textiles that he needs at reasonable price. After all, he is not in the market for more than a few yards or a few metres. He should at least get that much at a price that he can afford.

I am sure that the Hon. Minister for Agriculture and the Hon. Minister for Textiles, between them, shall see to it that the various divergent interests are harmonised keeping in view the overall national interest.

With these words, I support the Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV (Nalanda) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, though I have nothing special to speak on this Bill, Yet I would like to mention certain things in this context. A bulk of the population of our country is associated with cotton industry whether they are cotton growing farmers or labourers working in cotton mills. Common man of our country is associated with this industry.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government has formulated new economic policy. We have textile industry, and cotton farming for a long period in our country was on its peak even before independence. The muslin of Dhaka was famous not only in India but all over the world for its quality. Once the daughter of Aurangzeb went to his durbar after wrapping the muslin of Dhaka seven times over her body, yet it seemed that she had come without wearing clothes. Our country had such a high technique at that time. We are fortunate that the Government has withdrawn Bill regarding patent law in Rajya Sabha. Now the apprehension is that as to how far it will be used in cotton farming and whether it will be handed over to the multinational companies. I, therefore, would like to draw the attention of the Government that this industry should be saved from the tentacles of the Multi-National companies. I do not say that the Government is just going to hand it over to the Multi-National Companies. But it is being proposed to hand over gradually all Indian industries including agriculture to foreign companies. I, therefore, would like to caution the Government and hope that it will not let this industry fall into the tentacles of the Multi-National Companies.

With these words I conclude.

[English]

SHRI S.B. SIDNAL (Belgaum): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak on this Bill. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Minister for having brought this Bill. This Act was an old Act passed in the British era to suit their convenience to maintain the quality of a particular tract for themselves and for their own consumption. Now, after independence it has lost its relevance and though late, it is good that the Hon. Minister has brought forward this Bill for the free movement of cotton. In a free country, all the agricultural products should have a free movement to gain their economic height.

Sir, cotton is one of the important agricultural item produced in our country and it is grown in irrigated and non-irrigated areas. The farmer is suffering very much for want of fertiliser subsidy. The subsidy which is provided now is inadequate and the farmer cannot help to get more production for himself. So, the subsidy has to be increased adequately. But it is being said that there is a distinction between big farmers and the small and marginal farmers. As you know, after the Tenancy Act is introduced, in many of the States, specially in Karnataka and in the southern part of our country it has been totally implemented. The big farmer has only 50 acres of dry land and 10 acres of irrigated land. This was the position 20 years back and now they get hardly two or three acres of land. There is no big farmer now and there should not be any distinction. There should be wholesale subsidy for agriculturists. The agriculturist cannot be a rich man, because agriculture has a dependency on monsoon, transport, marketing and

prices. There is no godown facility for the farmer to store and sell at any time whenever the market gives good prices. He has no hoarding capacity also. He has no money.

Sir, cotton is actually one of the important products of agriculture and it is an employment-oriented product. One bale of cotton will employ thousands of people and feeds them right from the farm to the mill and to the market. But when the raw cotton is sold, the price given to the farmer is very little. The prices of pesticides are too; high and you cannot get the labour unless you provide a tempo or tractor in my area. It is very difficult to get labour and it is very costly also. The price of cotton goes up for two years and then in the third year it falls down. So, we approached the Government for support prices.

16.00 hrs.

The support price is so much inadequate, they cannot make both ends meet. Actually, our Hon. Agriculture Minister himself is an expert agriculturist and I request him to increase the support price so that it will enable them to have the minimum capacity for maintenance. Otherwise, without disposing his land, he cannot maintain. In dry farming it is very difficult. In the irrigated areas, fertiliser is a major component, in addition to the labour.

Coming to the pesticides, they are being sold very badly and there are fake pesticides in every place. Actually, the ignorant and illiterate agriculturists do not know and do not understand anything about this. He takes them and sprays there without any effect. The pesticides do not show any effect at all on the germs. This is a very serious matter. The Government has to take a serious note of it and punish the sellers or producers of fake seeds or at least take control of the quality maintenance. There is no quality.

My constituency, Belongal taluka of Belgaum District, is one of the top producers of cotton in the whole of Karnataka, first in Karnataka in the production of cotton. But the production now has been going in a descending order; it is getting decreased because of all these things. The availability of fertilisers is inadequate. It is very costly and is also not available. They have to buy them from the black market. There are so many things. When will he cross it?

Sometimes, we see that the cotton prices are up. Immediately people say, "oh! the agriculturist is becoming a rich man." Actually, if you calculate the cost of production that he bears, the remaining profit is very meagre. The poor fellow does not even account for his labour. His whole family works there. Though he says that he is earning Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 1,000 per acre, he does not account for the labour that he has put in, his child has put in and his whole family has put in. He does not account for that. Therefore, this has to be taken into consideration.

Cotton is just like one of the gold mines in our country. If cotton is properly harvested and if cotton production is properly managed, I do not think the agriculturist will become a poor man. It employs everyone. How much have we been earning by exporting ready-made garments? Cotton also suits to health. This polyester type cloth is not good for health. In the foreign market, there is a lot of attraction for cotton cloth. So, that has to be kept in view by the Government and its production should be encouraged fully.

What about fake seeds? Fake seeds are being sold like hot cakes. The grower does not know about it till the yield has been totally reduced. He is helpless. When he goes to the seller and tells him that his seeds are very bad, they have not got any quality, he says that they are of good quality but he has not put fertilisers or has not done their or that. He puts the whole blame on him. Thereby, the farmer is actually harmed and he is put to an irreparable loss; he has no other income to compensate and to sustain. This is the plight of the agriculturist who is growing cotton. Therefore, the quality of seeds should be maintained properly are very seriously. In Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, they just seal it, and after giving some brand name they just sell it. In this country or in any other country, fake notes are in circulation, what to talk of seeds. It is very damn easy for a fellow to sell a bag of bad quality seeds. Therefore, a serious view has to be taken by the Government and a mechanism has to be developed to see that such a fellow is caught and put into the jail. A special enactment may be made for this. Adulteration has become the order of the day in agriculture.

I compliment the Minister for bringing this Bill.

I take this occasion as an opportunity to request the Hon. Minister to manage all these things.

As regards quality maintenance, I would like to say that after the economic liberalisation, the multi-national companies may come and they may also establish mills and at that time the production may be inadequate because of the shortage of fertilisers and want of labour.

I would like to say a few points on agricultural implements and their use. It has not been possible to mechanise farming because the increasing population and the legislation on land have created fragments of land. When we cannot mechanise farming, we cannot expect good production. The price of a tractor is very high. It should be reduced. There should be via-media. If not, production will not come up to the expectations.

These are all the points which should be considered by the Government. A mechanism should be set up to monitor agriculture properly. Godown facility is also very important. You, Mr. Chairman, come from Punjab and you know how much agriculture suffers if despite the highest production in the country, we cannot hold it. Even the rich farmer in Punjab cannot keep the product because no facilities are available. That has also to be taken care.

Lastly, as regards support price, Shri Syed Shahabuddin said that the price should not go beyond a certain limit. He did not spell out what was the limit. I do not know whether he has experience in farming and whether he knows how much a farmer puts in and what is the yield that he gets and what will be the anticipated highest or lowest price. When you go to any Five Star hotel, you blindly pay the Bill and do not regret for the tips in hundreds. But if the agriculturist gets Rs. 5/- or Rs. 10/- or increase in procurement, he will be the happiest man. What a disparity between the city and the village? There is lot of disparity which is getting widened. We have to change the psychology of people to produce more wealth. Otherwise, the country cannot become rich. If the people sitting in Delhi or Bombay become *crorepatis*, the farmer in the village becomes *bikshapati*. What a disparity are we creating! This has to be properly managed to see that well-managed things are there in agriculture. Agriculture is heavily loaded. Four generations are working there. The grandfather, great grandfather, son, grandson and great grandson also are put to work on the land. It is heavily loaded. It has to be off-loaded by establishing industry. That has to be done.

I support this Bill. Shri G. Venkat Swamy is a very good Minister. He is liberal, pro-agriculturist and pro-poor.

I request the Hon. Minister to increase the support price.

I request the Government to increase the subsidy from Rs. 5,000 crores in the Budget to Rs. 7,000 crores or more.

When the agriculturist produces more, the industry gets a feed back. These two component parts have to be taken care of if the nation has to come up in agriculture. While China, Israel and Japan want first to agriculture and made the per capita income increase in agriculture, India has not made improvement in agriculture despite its being dependent on agriculture.

I congratulate the Hon. Minister for having brought this Bill. The free movement of cotton and other goods will help the nation in developing the economy.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I welcome the move of the Government to introduce the Bill for repealing the Cotton Transport Act-1923. But this Bill should have been introduced much earlier. The Hon. Minister has stated that it is a small Bill. But when the Britishers introduced this bill in 1923, its objective was not limited. Its objectives were comprehensive. At that time India was the largest textile manufacturing country in the world. The Britishers hatched conspiracy to eliminate the textile industry of India and the Cotton Transport Act, 1923 was framed for this purpose. As I opined just now that this Bill should have come much earlier. Although the Congress Party ruled for over 45

years in this country barring few days yet it did not pay attention towards it. I think that the Government does not pay attention to such industry, which provides jobs to the people living in seven and half lakh villages in India and which make the country prosperous. As Shri Shahabuddin has stated that this issue is related not only to the farmers, but also to factory owners, weavers and labourers. Had the Government paid its attention to make provision to pay genuine and remunerative prices to farmers and labourers in this Act, I would have thought that the farmers would get more help in growing cotton.

The Ganga-basin of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar is the most fertile area in the world. Cotton was grown there in abundance. The Britishers used to purchase cotton from this region on low prices for mills located in Maharashtra and Gujarat and people were forced to purchase the textiles on high prices. When freedom struggle was started under the leadership of Gandhiji, he drew the attention of people to prepare clothes by Charkha. India and Pakistan were not separated at that time. Shri Vijoy Bhai just mentioned about Muslim of Dhaka. Similarly the sari of Banaras was also famous. There are lakhs of weavers in our Bhadoi region. The people of Madhubani district in Bihar are also weavers. The people of Banaras also prepare good clothes. But the Government does not pay attention to their basic problems. Right from the period of British rule to the present era their problems are increasing by leaps and bounds.

I want that you should make arrangements to ensure that the weavers get remunerative prices for their products. Besides, I would like to say that he is able to work very little during the days because there is no electricity in the villages and there is no drinking water. If you make arrangements for electricity then he can work at night also and raise his standard of living. They have been engaged in weaving since the days of slavery. They were living in miserable conditions in 1923 also when the Britishers had enacted this Act and they are still living in poor conditions. If the Hon. Minister wants to raise the standard of Indian farmers and weavers then he should also make arrangements to ensure that they get remunerative prices also. If you do it, it will really be very useful for them.

These days farmers cultivate cotton in villages. But have you ever thought as to why the farmers, of Ganga basin of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, have abandoned cotton cultivation. They have done it because they had started incurring losses. They were nobody to purchase cotton from them. During the British rule, the Britishers used to buy all their cotton, albeit, at lower prices. Had the Government fixed reasonable prices for them and encouraged them to grow cotton then the farmers of Ganga basin would have continued growing cotton in a better way and then they would not have abandoned its cultivation. The question is not only of repealing the Cotton Transport Act, 1923 but it also concerns the weavers and the farmers. At the same time, it concerns

the consumers also in the way that you must be knowing that when this Act was enacted in 1923, the cotton cloth had become costlier for the Indian people and the profits must have been diverted by the Britisher; to their homeland. So, now when you are proposing to make an Act through this Bill in 1994, this Bill should not resemble the British act in any way. Because that Act had allowed for exploitation of our people and so, this Act should dispense with the provisions which lead to such exploitation. Our policy should ensure that our rural brethren, workers get clothes at cheaper rates. You are aware that people in rural areas do not wear coat pants. I mean to say that you could have atleast restricted those textile mills which manufactured suiting and shirting and could have fixed prices for those people who wear *dhotis*. Then it would have really been in the interest of the labourers and rural people of this country. It would have improved the daily life of the weavers.

I like to submit this much only that you have brought this Bill when the liberalisation process is going on, it is all right. I do not fully support liberalisation because the Government is using it to mislead the people of the country. But I must say one thing that you should take the responsibility of making security arrangements for those foreign companies which have been invited by you to operate in India. One businessman who had made an agreement involving Rs. one thousand crore in Karnataka had not been provided security. A man named Shri Som Chai Chawla was arrested in Delhi. The influential and powerful people of Chandraswamy had got him arrested. He was bailed out and then a CBI enquiry was ordered.

SHRI UMRAO SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have an objection to that.

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am talking about liberalisation. Security arrangements should be made for those foreign companies who are invited to operate here. I feel that if you make security arrangement for them or chalk out some scheme for the poor farmers, weavers and labourers or propose to repeal the 1923 Act then it is going to be successful. Unless this policy of liberalisation, includes the people of our country it is not going to succeed in this country. That is why, Sir, I would like to say, through you, that you have brought a Bill to facilitate the transportation of cotton from one part of the country to the other and now the farmer would be able to transport his cotton to other places. I am sure it is going to yield better results.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to suggest that the textile mills should be set up near the place where cotton is grown to benefit the farmers. This way the labourers will also get work to transport cotton unobstructed. Earlier the farmers had to transport it to far-off places and the English strategy behind it was to make the farmers poor. The proposed Act will have its significance only if you do not deviate from your objective. While you are going to enact a new legislation through the 'Bill of 1994' in place of the Act of 1923, it

should not happen that after a number of years some other Government may bring some other Bill to replace the existing one as you have been forced to do. If a new Bill is passed in its place then it will lose its validity.

Sir, before concluding my speech I would submit again that unless Indian farmers, labourers, weavers are made prosperous this Bill will prove to be of no avail.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Bombay South Central): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would conclude my speech within 2-3 minutes after putting forth 2-3 points. Today, either the price of cotton has increased or the Mills are closing down. Till 2 years back India was having lions, share in the overall cotton yield worldwide. But today we are not producing cotton. I demand from the Hon. Minister that the monopoly on purchase of cotton should end. CCI or NTC can buy cotton. I submit to you that this monopoly should be ended. There should be uniformity in the rates everywhere to benefit the small farmers. These days most of the mills are closed in Bombay due to the unavailability of cotton and several workers are starving. That is why, I demand that the prices of cotton should be controlled and all the closed mills should be revived in order to benefit the poor workers. You are going to modernise the textile industry. But in the absence of a proper cotton how can the miss owners prepare good cloth? If something gets obstructed in the modern machines then cotton would also get stuck up. Then how can the clothes be made? This is why I request you to give it a thought. I thank you for allowing me to speak.

[English]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGARHI (Deogarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a very simple Bill and an innocuous Bill, intended to repeal an Act of 1923, that is, the Cotton Transport Act, 1923. About 72 years ago, there was a Bill passed which became this Act, known as the Cotton Transport Act, 1923.

What was the scenario which was prevailing at that time? Twenty-four years later, we became free. Gandhiji who is called the 'Father of the Nation' appeared on the national scenario a few years before 1923. In 1920, he launched a movement against the British Government which was called the *Swadeshi Andolan*. Cotton trade in India has got a legacy; it has a history. Gandhiji used to say this—he was not saying just for the sake of saying, but he really meant it - that India's freedom was hanging on a string of thread

What was the significance behind it? You know, Sir, that we used to grow cotton in abundance and that very cotton used to go outside to England, that is, overseas. It was being transported overseas, to England, the Manchester, the Buckingham where the joint textile mills were awaiting the arrival of Indian cotton; then they were sent to the mills for manufacturing the textile clothes; and those finished clothes were coming back. We were purchasing them at exorbitant prices.

Indian farmers were exploited by those Britishers with the patronage of the British Government. Building up their economy was their sole objective and cotton trade was very much a part of their exploitation. As you know, some Hon. Members from the opposite side also were referring to the plight of the textile workers and weavers. Gandhiji had addressed himself to all these sections. He was worried about their plight. He also performed *satyagraha* before the textile mills because of their anti-workers attitude, particularly in Ahmedabad. In some situations, he was also engaged in trade union activity. No sphere was left out for Gandhi. Thus, Gandhi believed in what we say as '*katipinda kuti khao*' which means, eat the rice which is prepared by hand and not by the mill. It has economic philosophy behind it. It has not lost relevance in our country in today's context also where 900 million people are living and where we are worried about unemployment and deep-rooted poverty. So, this has not lost relevance today. This is Gandhian philosophy and Gandhian economy: Eat handpound rice and wear handwoven clothes and that is how, he introduced *charkha*. You know the importance of *charkha*, how and with what sanctity he was treating *charkha*. He suggested and accordingly, it was accepted. Earlier to this, *charkha* found place in the National Flag and then in the Congress flag. Of course, afterwards the Ashoka Charka replaced *charkha* in our National Flag. This was the significance of cotton trade and this was a legacy and linked with economy. It has an economic philosophy behind it. This is the background.

This Bill is very simple and innocuous. Naturally, in this background, Britishers wanted their interest to be safeguarded and it was a Bill to safeguard primarily their interest and cotton was not allowed to be transported anywhere in India. There were more restrictions on the movement of cotton and foodgrains. It had effect on production price, procurement price and price offered to the growers. It has a link with that. A few years before, I remember that when I was in Orissa Assembly, there were restrictions imposed on movement on foodgrains from district to district. Movement of foodgrains was allowed only within the district and not allowed to cross the border of the district without permit or licence from the competent authority. At that point of time, it was necessary because of the need on the part of the Government to procure foodgrains at a particular rate and if so many restrictions were not imposed, it was difficult to procure foodgrains at that rate.

On the other hand, the Government has a duty to ensure the supply of foodgrains at reasonable or cheaper prices particularly to the weaker sections. Such restrictions, I am glad, had been removed all over. Now, foodgrains can freely move from one State to another State throughout the country. That way, repealing of this measure is long overdue. That is why, it is a welcome step. As the adage goes, 'better late than never'.

I now come to the quality aspect. In the objectives of the Bill also, the importance of maintaining standards

is mentioned. This aspect should be looked into. Even in a free and market friendly economy, maintaining quality is very important. Otherwise, we cannot face competition. So, I again stress that this aspect should be taken care of.

As regards Indian textiles, they are famous all over the world. In different markets in Europe, Russia and other parts of the world, we find that the Indian textiles are very popular. But the irony of the situation is that there is a free flow of foreign textiles flooding the Indian market. It complicates the market process as well as our economy.

Another point that I would like to mention is about sick units. The health of our textile industry varies. All the mills are not in good health. There are sick units. Of course, in order to protect the workers, the Congress Government have taken over sick units from the private sector. Private mill owners and rich proprietors in Bombay and Gujarat used to make the mills sick and the Government then used to take them over. This situation is still lingering. Of course, the modern mills are doing quite well. Here I am referring to the sick units with outdated technology. We have to fight against this sickness and we have to modernise such mills.

In this context, I would like to mention that such a mill exists in the State sector in Orissa. It is in my constituency Jharsiguda. I am referring to Hasker mill. The workers are suffering and they are not getting their salaries also. In the Eighties, a number of spinning mills were set up by the Congress Government. During the regime of the Janata Government, a very peculiar situation arose wherein the Government sold the public sector spinning mills to private people. Then the private people resorted to the practice of making those textile units sick. Then the Government had to take them over. How could the private sector people purchase the public sector mills until and unless such mills had the capability to turn the tables and make profits with proper management? It is quite natural that those mills would make profits. That way, the Hon. Minister, is very progressive in his views and he is also concerned about the plight of the workers. I do appreciate his concern for the development and prosperity of the weaving community.

In terms of number, next to farming community comes the weaving community. But because of modernisation their sufferings have multiplied to a great extent. They are not in a position to compete with others. Under one of the Central schemes they were supposed to get looms from the State Government but that scheme is not working well. The State Governments are not implementing this scheme properly. The Centre should monitor the implementation of this scheme. I would request the Minister to review this scheme and if desired, call the State Textile Ministers, who are in charge of this sector, and discuss as to how the lot of the weavers could be improved.

Shahabuddinji referred about the interest of different sections of workers connected with this. He also expressed the concern that if higher prices are offered it will raise the price of the finished product. There is a way out, Sir. It will lead to fluctuation of cotton prices all over the country. Earlier we used to have the *Janata Cloth* or I think it was called as the *Loin Cloth*, which was used by the common people. Even now we can have the subsidized cloth and the element of subsidy can be adjusted against other luxurious textiles. So, there is a way out in order to see that the interest of different classes is protected.

With these words I support this Bill. At the same time I would like to say that it is time to have a thorough review of all the Acts that are there. There are so many outdated Acts which have outlived their lives. There are many such legislations which have been dumped in the almirahs of the Government. Such Acts have lost their relevance in the present context but they are still there in the Statute. They are making the judicial system more complicated. So, it is time for the Government of India to make a thorough review of all this and the things which are not considered relevant in today's context should be struck out of the Statute.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE (Vijayawada): Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I do not wish to take a long time. I do not wish to repeat what my senior colleague from Orissa or other friends have already spoken regarding the circumstances under which the previous Act was made and the explanation given by the Hon. Minister as to why he is now proposing to repeal it. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether the Government is really keen to protect the interest of the cotton growers as he is showing so much concern for the textile magnates.

The Hon. Minister also comes from my State of Andhra Pradesh. Sir, with a heavy heart I bring this to your notice. The cotton-growers of Guntur and Prakasam districts have made tremendous contribution for this country. Instead of our country being in a position of importing cotton, with tremendous zeal the cotton-growers of those districts took up cotton cultivation and made our country capable of exporting cotton. Sir, for the heavy price they paid the Government did not even show concern. As a member of the Eighth Lok Sabha, I pleaded with the then Prime Minister late Rajiv Ji and nearly 60 cotton-growers including some women have committed were all genuine cases — to consider their cases sympathetically and write off their debt burdens. But, Sir, we could not convince the then Government.

16.46 hrs.

(SHRI P.C. CHACKO in the Chair)

The National Front Government headed by Shri V.P. Singh and farmers' friend Shri Devi Lal took a bold decision to write off the debt burden of farmers because

of which the cotton-growers of those districts were relieved. Even gold ornaments of their wives were being made ready to be sold, that was the situation. I request the Hon. Minister, who comes from humble and weaker sections, and who always keeps the interests of weaker sections in his heart of hearts, to kindly take all necessary steps to protect the interests of the farmers. I want to know from the Government whether they are really thinking of giving representation to cotton-growers in the Cotton Corporation of India. Is there a single representative of the cotton-growers in the Cotton Corporation of India? All of them are traders. They do not really represent the interests of cotton-growers. I am not interested in x, y or z. My suggestion is that adequate representation of cotton-growers from different parts of this country be made in Cotton Corporation of India. Medium and short staple cotton is grown in Punjab and Haryana whereas long and extra-long staple cotton is grown in Andhra Pradesh. So, wide representation should be given to all the States.

Sir, I would like to bring to your notice another injustice that is being done to the Cotton-growers. We were happy when Shri Rajiv Gandhi brought forward the Long-term Textile Policy. When I went to Indonesia along with Shri Balam Jakhari who was the Speaker of Lok Sabha, we were told by them that they were very much in need of cotton and they liked our cotton but they were not sure whether the orders placed by them would be fulfilled or not. That was the situation in which the Government brought forward the Long-term Textile Policy. A minimum of five lakh bales of cotton were to be exported. But, Sir, unfortunately, due to the pressure of mill-owners, textile magnates, textile barons — most of them are big people — many a time the Government was willing to oblige their demands, putting restrictions on export quotas or stock limits etc., to bring down the prices of cotton. Every year when the cotton is about to enter the market, the Cotton Advisory Board gives some figures and another cotton association gives some other figures. Somehow they create a situation that cotton is in abundance. They want the farmers to sell away their cotton at as less prices as possible.

Is there any control on the prices of garments, textiles or fabrics sold by the big industries? To my knowledge, no. Even when the cotton prices have fallen, down, not a single instance can be seen when the cotton mill-owners brought down the prices of their products. It never happened. ~~They always increase their prices to earn huge profits.~~

They are already getting profits yet they want to get more and more profits at the cost of the farmers. Kindly see that let not the Government give such a scope for those things and definitely every year some quantity of cotton is exported abroad so that our reputation as a stable exporter of cotton in the international market is retained. Sometimes for some reasons if the production falls down abnormally and when we are in need of cotton then if the Government imports one lakh, two

lakh or three lakh bales of cotton, we do not have any objection.

I want to bring one more thing to the notice of the Hon. Minister. Of course, you are good enough to announce so many schemes and you have told that you are giving assistance worth hundreds of crores of rupees to the handloom weavers, but I am very sorry to say that one senior leader and a freedom fighter from the other House belonging to your own party, who was worked for the welfare of the handloom weavers under the able dynamic leadership of Prof. N.G. Ranga, was all the while saying that you are giving so many statements and the traders feel that the Government is giving so much benefit to the handloom weavers that they are going to be benefited a lot. I do not know for what reasons. But that is not actually reaching these poor handloom weavers in villages or in small towns. You please look into it.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: The State Government are not implementing it. What can I do?

SHRI SOBHANDREESWARA RAO VADDE : What I am suggesting is that when the Government of India is releasing hundreds of crores of rupees from the exchequer, please ensure that whichever State Government is there, this intended benefit should reach the handloom weavers and should pass on to them. Please, take necessary steps in this regard.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: You change the law here, I will implement it directly.

SHRI SOBHANDREESWARA RAO VADDE : You come forward with a legislation.....(Interruption) You have not shown that interest. Whereas you have brought forward a Bill to repeal the Cotton Transport Act, you have not preferred that. I do not think you have any intention doing that also.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: I am ready.

MR. CHAIRMAN (SHRI P.C. CHACKO): Do not make any such suggestions, that will create problem for you in future.

SHRI SOBHANDREESWARA RAO VADDE : In our country where more than 33 per cent of the population is below the poverty line, the scheme of making available *dhotis* and *saris* at subsidised prices will really help those poor people. At the same time, the handloom weavers will also be benefited by that.

The interest of the farmers is not in contradiction with the interest of the poor people. These big mill people are coming in the way. My suggestion is that while protecting the interest of the cotton growers, you can also help the handloom weavers by taking their produce, namely, *dhotis* and *saris* and make them available to the poor people at subsidised prices. This way you are giving more work and more income to these people so that they can earn a decent livelihood.

Finally, I would like to say something about Crop Insurance Scheme. Of course, that is not directly under you, but you please fight for that and talk to Shri Balram Jakhar. Till now the Crop Insurance Scheme does not cover cotton. The cotton growers of Andhra Pradesh have very sad state of experience. The cotton growers consume highest quantity of pesticides and fertilizer. Unfortunately, because of several wrong deeds committed by the traders, the farmers do not get proper seeds, they do not get good quality of pesticides and many a times even fertilizer is also spurious.

So, the farmers are suffering a lot. Please take necessary steps to include cotton also in the comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme.

Finally, I only request Shri G. Venkat Swamy, the Hon. Minister, to take all necessary steps to protect the interests of the farmers so that they will get a fair price, a better price. Kindly do not import cotton when it is not really required. Your very statement will make the prices fall down and these cotton mill magnets will purchase it at a very lesser price. Do not give that scope to them. For the first time you kindly give a representation to the farmers on the Board of the Cotton Corporation of India to speak on their behalf and to fight on their behalf.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for allowing me to speak.

I rise to support the Bill moved by Shri G. Venkat Swamy to repeal the Cotton Transport Act, 1923, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

Though this Bill was passed in 1923 itself, its repeal has been delayed too much. But it is better late than never. The Government has come forward to repeal that Bill. I think it will help the growers. This should have been done earlier to protect the interest of the growers and the weavers. When the Minister has already asked for the repealing of this Act, the House should unanimously support this Bill. At the same time I would request the Minister to bring forward a comprehensive Bill which would give relief, compensation and insurance scheme to the weavers at least. In our country, especially in Maharashtra, Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and in others parts of the country, forty percent of the people, especially the farmers and the weavers, depend on cotton industry. But the problem is that we are not giving more attention to them, with the result the actual farmers are not even getting the subsidy at a proper time.

Sir, it is a fact that from the Central Government you are sending money to the State Government to give subsidy to poor farmers and to the poor weavers. I know what happens in my State. I cannot speak about the other States and they know better than me. But in my State, in Nadia, Murshidabad and Burdwan Districts, lacks of weavers who belong to this category are not getting the subsidy because of the middlemen, who just give this subsidy to the *Bara Bazaar* area, the marketing area, and then the rich people purchase all the cotton,

with the result that the poor people do not get the subsidy and they have to purchase cotton at a higher price. The weavers are suffering a lot because of this problem. So, when you are sending money, there must be a monitoring system to see what subsidy was given to the farmers; they should get this subsidy at a proper time and in a proper method so that they should not suffer....(Interruptions)

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: That subsidy is not for cotton yarn...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: There must be subsidy for cotton also. You do not have subsidy for cotton to the middle class and lower class weavers and farmers. I am not telling about upper middle class or rich people. I am telling about the farmers who belong to the weaker sections of the society. For these people, I appeal that there must be a policy to give subsidy for cotton from the Government. For yarn also the people who are entitled to get this subsidy are also not getting it. Sir, will you just investigate this matter and see that this does not happen in future? If you give some relief to the people and if it does not reach them, then what is the necessity? There is no necessity to send money. So, this subsidy should reach the people at a proper time. There must be a machinery and a monitoring system in the Government so that you can find out the details through this machinery. I am not blaming anybody for this. There are some touts in our country. There are some people who always do like this. So, you have to take strong action against these people.

Sir, you have the Textile Policy and you want to modernise the textile mills also. But there is a problem. In Maharashtra and in West Bengal, many NTC mills are there.

17.00 hrs.

It will be appreciated that even the Members from both the States were agitated because of the situation in the NTC mills. In these NTC mills, or the textile mills, the employees are sometimes getting the salaries and sometimes they are not getting them. The problem is that the modernisation schemes are in the Government's hands and if the Government does not start work at the proper time the mills go into liquidation. Then the Government will blame the workers for liquidation. So, the Government should take action at the proper time to ensure that the mills do not go into liquidation.

We should remember that we are going into the twenty-first century. Our technology, our modernisation programme should help the workers in getting the proper training so that they can run these mills in a proper way. But the problem is that the Government is not paying proper attention to the NTC mills. That is why the mills in Bombay and Bengal have suffered. I do not know about the other States. But they are suffering a lot. The Government is directly involved in these NTC mills. Some NTC mills are going to be closed down because of paucity of funds. The Hon. Minister may

please look into the matter so that modernisation can be started and the workers of NTC mills get their salary at the proper time and they can work in a proper manner.

A proper infrastructure and work culture have also to be created so that the industry can be built up properly. The Central Government should also issue some guidelines to the State Governments and the owners of NTC mills also because they sometimes violate the rules. They do not listen to the Government. They do not pay the provident fund of ESI contribution due from the employer on behalf of the employees. It is very unfortunate that we have so many laws in our hands but due to lack of proper implementation or non-implementation, people suffer most.

I do not want to speak in detail because I have a poor knowledge about this particular Bill. But as I have mentioned, I want the interests of the weavers to be taken care of and the NTC textile mills should be given cotton subsidy. Also, a comprehensive Bill may be brought up to take care of the interests of the weaker sections.

This is a good Bill. I am glad that the Government has remembered that it should be repealed. I must congratulate the Hon. Minister for bringing forward this Bill. At the same time I would request him to bring up a comprehensive Bill within a short time so that the weavers and farmers become self-sufficient instead of depending on others.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): The Cotton Transport Repeal Bill 1994, was enacted in 1923 and it is after such a long period that the Government has paid attention towards it. Every Hon. Member has said that it should have been brought much earlier. First of all, in some areas cotton is grown in abundance and a large number of farmers are engaged in it. The great poet Tulsidas has compared cotton with the character of a saint. He has said "Sadhu Charit Nij Saris Kapasa". The character of the saint should be like cotton. Thus, the cotton has been given that much importance in our country. By improving its quality, we can earn foreign exchange. Therefore, we should grow good quality of cotton by helping the farmers, so that we can earn foreign exchange through its export. The Government must be attentive towards it. There are many such things towards which we do not pay attention. The quality is one such thing. We have to resort to import of the material in the absence of the quality products. How long will it go? The farmer does not have the capacity to store it. Therefore, he sells the raw material at a cheaper rate. Thus, the farmer can not earn profit on account of it. Sometimes the farmer does not get the cost of production. Whenever the price goes up, he is able to earn some profit. But it is on the other hand disadvantageous since the cloth will be costly due to the high price. Therefore, there should be uniformity in the prices. If the prices of fertilizer, diesel

etc. are fixed then the farmer can get some profit on account of the production of cotton. But the Government does not think so. It has never thought about the farmers. Our Hon. Agriculture Minister says that he is well aware of farming and he himself is a farmer but the farmers have not got any benefit of it. Had the Government thought about it, a Bill in this regard would have been brought in the House. Now, the farmer also knows that this Government is their enemy. This Bill should have been brought much earlier. However, the Government has at last awakened.

It should also be taken into consideration that many people are making their livelihood through cotton. Our weavers are wholly dependent on it but today they are leading a miserable life. An Hon. Member has said that the amount granted for them as assistance is swallowed by the middlemen. It is a fact. The weavers in Bihar used to do weaving in their houses but today they are without work. The Co-operative society set up to grant them loan is also not working. The Congress Government has also swallowed it. Job opportunities have been provided in the big cities like Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : Please look into it that why the money granted to Bihar was diverted?

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH: The Laloo Government had been in power for five years but prior to that, your Government was in power. It was responsible for the ruination of co-operatives. Had the co-operatives not been ruined, the weavers would not have faced starvation? They could have got loan through it and done something. The Government have cheated the people of this country. Whether the Government admits it or not but now the people have understood it well and they are doing justice.

The Bill, which has been brought here is a good one and we support it. Had the Government paid attention earlier towards the farmers and the agriculture, the present circumstances could have been avoided. Unemployment would not have increased among farmers. Today, the children of the farmers do not want to grow cotton as they do not get suitable remuneration for it. He wants to run a tea shop. The Government should think over its reason. Ours is an agricultural country. Had the farmers been provided all the facilities of irrigation, which the factories are getting on the basis of loan, they would have certainly benefited. Today all the financial institutions are providing loan to the factories but the farmer invests his own capital and he is disappointed when he does not get the suitable remuneration for his product. Therefore, the mistakes of the Government are not pardonable. The Government should give more stress on quality and go for the modernisation of the mills. These spinning mills are closed down on account of the non-availability of the cotton. Thus, the labourer sits idle and the Government says that the mill is running in loss. Therefore, I would

like to say that this Government is incapable and inefficient. Had the Government been efficient the mills would not have closed down. Whether it be Bengal, Bihar or Maharashtra these mills close down due to the wrong policies of the Government. This Government has been in power for such a long period but it still has not awakened. They thought that this country belongs to them only but now the people have become more wise and they know that this nation also belongs to them.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, with these words, I conclude.

SHRI DHARMANNA MONDAYYA SADUL (Solapur):
Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support this bill of 1994 further amending Cotton Transport Repeal Bill, 1923 brought forward by the Hon. Minister.

Ours is an agricultural country with a large production of cotton. During the British era, an Act was enacted which provided that cotton will be used only in places where it is grown. I thank the Hon. Minister for his resolve to change that outdated Act now. Today, the number of Textile mills is increasing in every state. New powerlooms industries are being set up but when cotton is not sent to a particular area it remains unutilised. This way, justice can not be done to the farmers. In this connection, I do not want to repeat here what has already been said about it but would make 2-3 points.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is a demand of 1.40 crore cotton bales in our country as against its production of 1.20 crore bales. There is the shortage of 20 lakh bales due to which the rates of cotton have been increasing for the last two years. The Government should take steps to find a way out. A way was found out by making a statement on the export of cotton and by granting permission for its import. I would again like to thank the Hon. Minister for performing with full sense of responsibility towards his department.

It is a very positive step but what Rao Saheb has said is not correct. The rates of cotton are increasing in the country today due to its shortage. Therefore, there is need to import cotton. The people engaged in this industry opine that crores of poor workers can get more work and the country can earn more profits if fabrics in place of cotton and yarn are exported. Therefore, there is no need at all to export cotton. It should be imported. This way, the farmer can get remunerative prices and nobody will oppose it. I think that the farmer today, is getting more price for his produce than the support price fixed therefor. Under these circumstances, the handloom and powerloom industry is suffering due to the shortage of cotton and increase in yarn rates. The Hon. Minister has found a way out for this. The Government is giving subsidy at the rate of Rs. 15 per kg. on the yarn used for handloom. It is a very good scheme but it should be implemented properly. Many states are not giving the required subsidy on handloom yarn and the Government should pay attention to it.

Today, there are 124 NTC mills in the public sector of which only 110 are functioning. After a great effort a Rs. 2005 crore modernisation scheme was formulated which is now pending with the Cabinet. I request the Government to clear it immediately. This way, the workers can get regular work. The Government should take a decision on it without delay. A meeting of the Handloom Powerloom Board is scheduled to be held at Ahmedabad on 4th of the month. I expect the Hon. Minister to make an announcement in that meeting because handlooms and powerlooms constitute a vital part of Textile sector in which new powerlooms are added every year. There should be a scheme to give relief to them, arrange for their finances, make them available yarn at reasonable prices and constitute an Export Promotion Council for their export. The Government decision in this regard is also right. It is reflective of a right approach of the Government on Handloom, Powerloom industry. I support this Bill and before concluding, thank the Government once again for bringing forward this Bill.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA (Mandsaur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, many Hon. members have expressed their opinion on this Bill. The Bill is so simple and innocuous that one really starts thinking as to whether there is any need to speak on it. But at the same time this Bill to repeal the Cotton Transport Act, 1923 is irrelevant and impractical. This is not the only Bill which can be termed irrelevant, but there are still many such Acts which were enacted during the British period and are still being enforced here despite their losing relevance and utility. While speaking on this Bill today I would like to request the Government to review all of them and all the unnecessary and useless laws should be scrapped so that we are not entrapped into the mess of these laws.

As regards this Bill, I have already stand that this is one line Cotton Transport Repeal Bill and it needs not be talked about too much. But this Bill is directly related to farmers, weavers and lakhs of workers in textile mills, so, something needs to be said on it. The Government has made certain arrangements to safeguard the interest of cotton growers. There is an institution named cotton Corporation which safeguards their interests. But it has been generally found that the cotton corporation has been incompetent to protect the interests of farmers for some time back. For instance, last year the prices of cotton declined. The farmers had certain expectations from the Cotton Corporation, but the Cotton Corporation did not rise to the occasion, it was untraceable : I request the Government to make such a provision as may enable the Cotton Corporation to protect the interests of cotton growers. It is right that cotton is grown in Maharashtra, Gujarat and West Bengal. But quality cotton is grown in the Narmada belt of Madhya Pradesh and it is exported. But we do not restrain our temptation to earn foreign exchange and

sideline our own requirement. Even today we are not able to grow cotton enough to cater to our own requirement.

Recently, the prices of the insecticides needed for the cotton crop have risen very sharply. There has been hike in the prices of chemical fertilizers, irrigation and power tariffs. There has been rise in the prices of the cash crops like Soybean, Isabgool, Sugarcane but not that of cotton. However, the sugarcane growers are also suffering. They are also not getting any protection. Sugar is being grown in larger quantity but that is not up to our requirement. The prices of sugar have not been raised and consequently the sugar mills are being closed in quick succession. Similarly, the textile mills will also be closed. Many mills have been closed in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and almost all the textiles mills operated by the NTC or operated under the surveillance of the NTC are closed. I have personally met the Hon. Minister. I would like to request him to provide all necessary assistance required to revive these mills. The Government has launched a package for the labourers. But this package is not acceptable to labourers. The labourers have approved of some of its provisions but by and large they do not approve of it in general. Therefore, the Government should provide maximum assistance, then alone they can function properly. Otherwise lakhs of labourers are jobless following the closure of these mills and a new problem of unemployment is cropping up.

I am raising these issues regarding the Bill. I would like to at an example from previous days. The Hon. Minister is not present here. I wanted to know whether there is any Plan under crops Insurance Scheme or not. In recent past, the crops of cotton growers of Madhya Pradesh were destroyed. When complained, the State Government asked the percentage of loss incurred, and the percentage of adulteration in insecticides. I am surprised that adulteration of water or even one drop into milk is cognizable adulteration and it entails punishment whereas nobody was prosecuted for 40 to 50 per cent adulteration in insecticides. They were given a free hand to such an extent. I would like to submit to the Hon. Minister that your party has been in power in Madhya Pradesh and if your yourself set such examples here, the interest of the farmers cannot be protected. I, therefore, want that certain policy should be fixed in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the rain this time is untimely. The standing crops of gram have been destroyed. Cotton, wheat and opium were also adversely affected whenever there are natural calamities our farmers are in great embarrassment. The rains badly affected the cotton crops also. Today it is necessary to grown maximum cotton.

Just now our Hon colleague, Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat has given an example of Rajasthan and stated how farmers are worried there. I would like to know from the Government whether there is the provision of

any cotton or textile policy or exchange of commodities in the agreement reached with the world Trade Organisation. Will the sufferings of farmers not increase due to it ? Today cotton growers are very worried. Our other farmers are also concerned. The performance of our farmers in growing the quality seeds as a result of their hard labour is conspicuous and they have high demand abroad. But the quality cotton is being exported and its new variety is being evolved frequently one after the another and its demand is also increasing rapidly. From this point of view, I think that it is essential to discuss the protection of the interest of farmers. The interest of farmers and weavers in particular should not all be overlooked at any rate.

Today the situation is such that the weavers do not get yarn in time. If they require 50 counts or 60 counts of yarn they are supplied yarn of 110 counts or 120 counts. They are not supplied the variety of yarn they require whereas they cannot utilise yarn of finer variety. Thus the yarn required for preparing coarse cloths is not made available to them.

As I have already stated, I would not like to go into detail. But taking advantage of this opportunity I would like to urge upon the Government that the interest of handloom workers, power workers, mill workers and weavers should be protected.

This time the Hon. Minister of Agriculture is not present in the House. But I would like to urge that the interest of the cotton growers should be safeguarded. Since, the Government is going to repeal this Bill, it must introduce an integrated or a comprehensive Bill so that the provision to protect the interest of cotton growers and weavers are made in it.

Every other day problems of workers are brought before you, be it regarding Sajjan Mill of Ratlam, Hukumchand Textile Mill, NTC Mills or some other mills. The new problems of some mills of Rajasthan are also cropping up every day. I want that you should make such an arrangement so that such problems do not crop up at all. In this regard, a definite policy is required to be evolved.

I understand that the Government have taken some steps but the desired results are not being achieved. We want that these steps should lead to good results and all the obstructions in this regard should be removed.

There is a saying, "It is never too late to mend" The Government is forced to introduce new economic reforms and go in for liberalisation. That is why, you have brought this Bill in the House...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH:-Do you mean to say that WTO is exercising pressure on the Government.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Yes, it is their compulsion because by and by, they are resorting to de-control. This Bill should also be viewed in the same perspective. Otherwise, it could have been brought a

year or two years ago or even earlier. When, you have been compelled to introduce this Bill in the House because of pressure from WTO. I would want that you should also show compulsion to protect the interests of the farmers of our country. The interests of our farmers should not be overlooked. Further, the interests of the takhs of workers engaged in weaving and handloom sector should also not be overlooked.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Bill introduced in the House is very small consisting of only four pages. On this Bill about 12-13 Hon. Members have given their opinion. I am happy to note that they gave attention to the work being carried out in the Ministry of Textiles and came out with their suggestions. Besides, the Hon. Members have also pointed out the loopholes in my Ministry and I also thank them for that.

The Hon. Members have referred in their speeches about the interests of the nation; the interests of the weavers, the farmers and the poor, who constitute 40 percent of the population and live below poverty line. I would like to inform you that around two and a half year back, I had assumed the charge of this Ministry and on the basis of the discussions held here in connection with weavers I would like to tell that Rs. 300 crore had been earmarked in the Seventh Five Year Plan for the welfare of weavers. I had raised this issue before the Hon. Prime Minister and told him that the number of weavers is next only to the agricultural labourers and they are crores in number. So, this amount will not be sufficient for their welfare. Something more should be done for them. In view of this the Hon. Prime Minister earmarked Rs. 1838 crore in the eighth five year plan for the welfare of weavers. Out of this amount, Rs. 690 crore will be spent for their welfare through rural development. Programmes have also been formulated to provide them 3 lakh and 27 thousand looms under IRDP and impart training to one lakh weavers under TRYSEM scheme. A separate provision has been made to provide work through Jawahar Rozgar Yojana to those weavers who work in rural areas.

Besides, earlier they used to find it difficult to get hank-yarn. Now efforts have been made to make it easily available to them. According to the report of the Abid Hussain Committee the monthly income of a weaver's family, in which his wife and children also work, comes around Rs. 300 which is even less than Rs.1100 per month, calculated as the monthly income of those living below poverty line. In other words, their standard of life is even lower than those living below the poverty line. Several schemes have been launched for their uplift but I regret to say that the Central Government had to ask for the schemes by repeatedly reminding the State Governments. However, some schemes for the welfare of these people were submitted to us which were immediately accorded approval. It is a matter of great surprise and concern that the State

Governments are not implementing those schemes. What else can we do? We repeatedly held meetings with the Ministers of various states for the implementation of these schemes. We even involved the Hon. Prime Minister who also repeatedly asked the State Governments for implementation of these schemes. A meeting of the Chief Ministers was also convened and they were requested to implement the welfare schemes for the weavers as they are dying of hunger.

Ms. Mamata Banerjee just mentioned that the Central Government has been releasing fund to West Bengal but that amount is not spent for the benefit of weavers. Bihar also gets funds but these are diverted to other works. The weavers are living a miserable life. Once the funds get deposited in the coffers of the State Government, it is diverted elsewhere.

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: You are friendly with both Bihar and West Bengal Governments.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: You may criticise but you should do it before a hungry person. Leave aside the political matters, you should only appreciate the truth.

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Mr. Minister, we are appreciating.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: Whatever I am saying is not about some particular State Government but in fact, I am saying about all the State Governments which include congress-ruled states also. I am referring to all the States. All those programmes regarding welfare of the weavers which had been approved by the Central Government are not being implemented by the State Governments.

Sir, the weavers constitute 90 percent of the total members of people living below poverty line. You should fathom their hunger, misery and plight. Here we approve the schemes for their welfare and sent to the State Governments but they do not implement those schemes. We are helpless as we cannot directly interfere in the affairs of the State Governments. Even then, we have found several other ways to ensure that they get hank-yarn some way or the other. We supplied hank-yarn to three thousand centers and asked them to supply dye to five hundred centers but they do not implement the directions.

Mamataji said that the middlemen are pocketing the money. I am reminded of what Shri Rajiv Gandhi had said that thousands crores of rupees are sanctioned by Parliament but the poor people get less than 15 percent. There are middlemen to pocket the money. The same thing happened to Rs.1836 crore...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH: You are saying this and that but I would only like to say that you gave birth to corruption.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ramashray Prasad Singh, please do not do like this. I will not allow any intervention by the Members now.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kumari Mamata Banerjee, please take your seat now.

[Translation]

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: I seek the cooperation of the Hon. Members for practical implementation. Please help us in getting the funds utilized which are approved by us and are meant for the poor people and weavers. (Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: This is a good thing and we appreciate it. you give the Hon. Members proper information as to how much fund has been provided to different States and which State Government has not utilised the funds so that

[English]

We can take up the matter with the State Government also.

[Translation]

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: As per the suggestion extended by Mamataji, I will give all the information to the Hon. Members indicating the names of States where we have set up centers alongwith the number of such centers and the details of the schemes prepared by us. I also sympathise with the farmers as I also belong to a poor family. I am aware that the farmers put in hard labour in their fields and wait for the day when their produce will reach the market. You as well as the members of Telugu Desham have also said that the cotton-growing farmers are living a difficult life. I would like to say that earlier farmers used to get a support price from the CCI. The Hon. Members have informed that around 260 farmers committed suicide during the regime of Shri V.P. Singh. Thanks to God that it has not happened after Shri Narasimha Rao came to power. I would like to tell you that the support price of J-34 was Rs.985 per quintal two years back and today it is Rs.2,225 per quintal, the increase has been 126 per cent which is beneficial to the farmers...(Interruptions)

SHRI UTTAMRAO DEORAO PATIL (Yavatmal) : There is a great difference between the support price and the market price. The support price should also be increased proportionately to the market price...(Interruptions)

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : In case the support price is less, the CCI should procure it. I have mentioned that price.

The support price of F-414 was Rs.1000 and today it is Rs. 2,345. Likewise, the support price of DCH-32 which was Rs.1300 is Rs. 2,775 today. There are many

such rates. It means that the farmers have been getting good remunerative prices during the last and the current year but the Hon. Member is not aware of it and if he is then...(Interruptions)

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA (Cuttack) : Don't create a confusion. Support price and market price are two different things. Just tell us how much has the support price increased? When the market price is Rs. 2,000 the support price is Rs. 900. Why are not you increasing the support price?

SHRI DILEEP SINGH BHURIA (Jhabua) : As the Hon. Minister has stated that it was Rs. 200 during the V.P. Singh regime and now it is Rs. 900. But at that time, the weaver was worst sufferer.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : Just listen for a minute. What was the market price when the support price was fixed at Rs. 200. The support price should increase proportionately to the market price. What is your yard stick?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : The support price is fixed every year by the Ministries of Agriculture and Textiles after evaluating the total price. Thereafter, in case the market price is less than the support price, the Government immediately procures the produce of the farmers so that he does not face any problem. I will tell you how much increase has the market rate registered. In 1990, it surpassed the support price. The newspaper reports revealed starvation death among weavers. Now, its price has doubled. Starvation death were reported when its price stood at Rs.1300-1400 but, today, its price ranges between Rs. 2200 to 2700. You will also have to go into deep about the origin of cotton. The journey of cotton begins when the farmers grows the crop and it reaches the weaver, than via powerloom to the mill owner and lastly to the poor consumers 40 per cent of whom live below the poverty line. We shall have to look at the price rise and alongwith the farmers keep the interest of the poor consumer, who is affected by the price increase, in mind.

[English]

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : Again, Sir, if the Minister is trying to mislead the House, then we are undone. If you go by the Economic Survey presented by Shri Manmohan Singh, the plight of the weavers has been mentioned there. If you go by that then you yourself will contradict your statement because their plight has not changed.

MR. CHAIRMAN : That is a general subject. Let us not go into that. We are not going into the Economic Survey. Please sit down...(Interruptions)

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : I was just asking him, what is the yardstick being followed by the Ministry to fix the support price and whether it has any relationship with the market price or not?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : I explained it to you.

[Translation]

The Minister of Agriculture and the Ministry of Textiles jointly conduct a survey about it every year. Subsequently, the support price is fixed. I placed before you the details of increase in the market price. You ask any farmer if he is happy or not. If he is not happy...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : It is a minimum thing the Minister must know. When the demand is there and production is going down, naturally the market will go up...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please do not reply to this question. You have made it very clear. Please continue. Do not go into these things.

[Translation]

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : Now, I come to the prices. I placed the facts before you to make you aware that there is the consumer, the poor man of India who demands a cheaper cloth. Just now our Hon. Member said that the consumer should be helped to buy a *dhoti*, a shirt. You must be aware, I am addressing Pandit ji, that in the last year we extended a subsidy of Rs. 30 crores at the rate of Rs. 15 per Kg. the moment the prices of hank-yarn increased. Has such thing happened in our history earlier?

Let me announce it here today that yesterday we took a decision in this regard and the Hon. Prime Minister also agreed to it. We apprised him of the increasing price of yarn, which has posed a great threat to the survival of the weavers. Therefore, from tomorrow onwards the weavers will get subsidy at the rate of Rs. 20 per Kg.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : That will be pocketed by the middlemen and will not reach the weaver.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : You should be happy that we are taking appropriate measures...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : I have stated that the State Government will implement it.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please do not disturb like this. Please do not make comments like this. Please listen to the Minister. Please try to understand what he said. The farmers are getting good price and new schemes are being announced. Why don't you appreciate that.

[Translation]

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : Mr. Chairman, Sir, many Hon. Members put forth their points of view here with regard to NTC mills. I have been a member of the Trade Union. I know whether these mills can actually be run or not. I was on this job for six months and visited many industries. There are 100-150 years old machinery. We

pondered over how can they complete in the international market and go in for quality production?

There are 122 NTC mills spread all over India. Mamata ji was saying that these are in West Bengal and Bombay. But they are also located in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. These 122 mills are located at different places in India.

AN HON. MEMBER : Uttar Pradesh also.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : Uttar Pradesh is a very popular State. I sought the assistance of the Textile Research Association for the modernisation of these mills. SITRA, BITRA, ATERA, NITRA conducted research and we arranged funds on behalf of NTC for this purpose. We also assessed whether these mills can be modernised and made viable or not. Mohan Rawale ji and other Members of Parliament attend the meetings of our Ministry. A plan for their modernisation has been sent to the Research Institution. An expenditure of Rs. 2005 crores was envisaged for the purpose. We submitted a modernisation plan for all the 122 industries. Then, a tripartite meeting was held in the Labour Ministry which was attended by the members of the Trade Union from all over India. After 6 months of discussions, we reacted an agreement. We put up a proposal of modernisation without Government budgetary support and it is pending with the Cabinet. I assure the Hon. Members that it will be approved by the Cabinet within a fortnight or a month. All the NTC mills in India will be modernised.

Many Hon. Members were saying something on the World Trade Agreement. The Ministry of Textile has entered into an agreement which will benefit the Textile industry. A very good agreement was also reached with the U.S.A. and the European market during bilateral talks in December. I had given its information through the Press also. I would reiterate that our export for this year is \$ 9 billion. According to Ministry of Commerce, India's total export is 33 per cent. When I took the charge of this Ministry, it was Rs. 12,000 crores. It has reached 30,000 crores today. I think that after the bilateral agreement, the modernisation programme of the textile mills will become successful. Once the NTC mills start good production, the Government of India will modernise the private sick mills also. This way, India will hold top position in textile trade.

We have achieved the target of \$ 9 billion fixed for this year and next year, it is expected to cross the target of \$ 12 billion. With the cooperation of all Hon. Members, the textile industry will make big strides.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, this transport Bill not of much significance today. It was brought forward by the British when Mahatma Gandhi started using spinning wheel (charkha) and its main objective was to deny Bengal of good quality cotton.

I examined it after assuming the office and found that there is no need of it at all. When the liberalisation

policy has been adopted and the cotton can be supplied throughout the country, why should we have it? It should be repealed. Therefore, I have brought this Bill. I would like to assure the Hon. Members that if they support the steps taken by the Textile Ministry, we will be able to help the poor, the weavers, the powerloom workers, the mill workers, the farmers and all...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is the duty of the Government to maintain a balance between the farmer and the weaver. If the price hikes, the weaver will suffer and if the price falls the farmer will suffer. Therefore, the Textile Ministry is trying to maintain balance between them. The poor, the cloth merchant, the weaver and above all, the nation will be benefited by this.

Keeping all these things into consideration, I have presented this Bill and I hope that the Hon. Members would pass it.

SHRI MOHAN RAWLE : The NTC has not yet paid Rs. 100 crore to the CCA and the Maharashtra Cotton Federation and therefore, these institutions are not supplying cotton to the cotton mills of Bombay. I would like to know whether the Government will pay this amount or not?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : He has started advocating the cause of Maharashtra soon after the Shiv Sena Government has come to power. Everybody knows Shri Mohan Rawle. The NTC does not have fund and that is why the modernisation scheme has been brought. The above institutions have co-operated immensely. Modernisation will be undertaken after the funds are mobilized. They are also public sector undertakings. We will definitely pay their dues.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Will the Government withdraw the notification regarding stock?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : It has been withdrawn.

SHRI SYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, will the Government supply cotton to the closed mills of West Bengal till modernisation commences?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : The Hon. Members know very well about West Bengal. Please tell me if the wages of any worker has been withheld there by closing the mill. The Hon. Members also know that the modernisation programme is before us and we are even giving idle wages...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI UTTAMRAO DEORAO PATIL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, on account of the Cotton Monopoly Act in Maharashtra, cotton can not be transported outside the state and the whole cotton is purchased by the State Government itself. The scheme, which is very popular among the farmers, has been brought by the Congress Government. What impact will it have on the Maharashtra Cotton Monopoly Act once this Act is passed?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : This Act and the Maharashtra Cotton Monopoly Act are not inter-linked.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN (SHRI P.C. CHACKO) : Now, the discussion on this Bill is over. Let us now take up the motion for consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That the Bill to repeal the Cotton Transport Act, 1923, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House will now take up Clause-by-Clause consideration of the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That Clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2 was added to the Bill.

Clause 1 - short Title

Amendment made :

Page 1, line 3,-

for "1994" substitute "1995" (2)

(Shri G. Venkat Swamy)

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is:

"That Clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted

Clause 1, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Enacting Formula

Amendment made:

Page 1, line 1,-

for "Forty-fifth" substitute "Forty-sixth" (1)

(Shri G. Venkat Swamy)

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is:

"That the Enacting Formula, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

The Enacting Formula, as amended, was added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is:-

"That the Long Title stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

The Long Title was added to the Bill.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : I beg to move:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN : We have got five minutes more but the agenda is over. I thank all the Hon. Members for their valuable contributions for the day.

The House stands adjourned to meet again at 11AM on 31st March, 1995.

17.58 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, March 31, 1995/Chaitra 10, 1917 (Saka).
