

The Lok Sabha reassembled after Lunch at eighteen minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

ACUTE SHORTAGE OF DIESEL AND KEROSENE IN THE COUNTRY.

श्री कमला मिश्र मधुकर (मोतीहारी) :
 अध्यक्ष जी, मैं अविलम्बनीय लोक महत्व के निम्नलिखित विषय की और पेट्रोल तथा रसायन मंत्री का ध्यान दिनाता हूँ और प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि वे इस बारे में एक व्यवस्था दें —

“देश में होज़न और मिट्टी के तेल की भारी कमी” ।

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): Sir, Hon'ble Shri K. M. Madhukar and other Members have called the attention regarding the acute shortage of diesel and kerosene in the country. The position is indicated below.

The demand for High Speed Diesel (HSD) has been growing very fast in the last 2 years. Thus, while the annual growth rate of HSD was 8 to 9 per cent until 1977-78, it rose to a little over 11 per cent in 1978-79 and has been of the order of 15.5 per cent during the period April—December 79 over the corresponding period in 1978. The steep increase in HSD demand has been due to factors such as increased transportation of goods in bulk by road instead of by rail over long distances, short-falls in power availability leading to the employment of captive diesel generating sets and increased demand of the product for agriculture pumps owing to the unprecedented drought condition in various parts of the country.

Though the State Governments were advised in September 79 that supplies of HSD during the period October 79 to March 80 will be maintained at a level 5 per cent higher than the actual sales in the preceding year, additional allocations over and above the quotas so fixed were made to meet the high demand of the product. Thus, the

original allocations of 652,000 tonnes of HSD for the month of October for all States and Union Territories was raised by 100,000 tonnes. Similarly, the original allocations of 700,000 tonnes and 720,000 tonnes for the months of November and December respectively were raised to 781,000 tonnes and 808,000 tonnes respectively.

2. The situation however, changed drastically since the last week of December, 1979 due to the agitation in Assam. The refineries at Digboi, Gauhati and Bongaigaon in Assam closed down in the last week of December and Barauni refinery in Bihar had also to shutdown on 2nd January, 1980 following stoppage of pumping of crude oil from Assam to Barauni. The monthly production of HSD in the four refineries together is about 150,000 tonnes. HSD produced in the Assam refineries was being consumed in the North-eastern States and Union Territories, North Bengal and partly in Bihar. HSD coming out of Barauni refinery was being moved by pipeline to areas of Bihar and UP. and to a certain extent by rail to other North-Western locations in the country. In order to meet this new situation, Government had taken certain steps like increased pumping of diesel and kerosene from Haldia through the Haldia-Barauni-Kanpur pipeline, adjustment of the rail movement schedules to ensure availability of products at locations which were otherwise fed from these refineries, positioning of increased quantity of diesel and kerosene at the port locations through imports, etc.

In spite of these alternative arrangements, however, it was not possible to make good the entire shortfall caused by the disruption in production in these four refineries. The shortfall had to be spread out to the extent possible over a larger area and cuts in allocations of HSD ranging between 10 per cent and 33 per cent were imposed in the first week of January in respect of the allocations of HSD to different States and Union Territories for that month. However, efforts were made to maintain the

supplies of HSD in the month of February at a level 5 per cent over the sales in February 1979. The restricted availability of the product caused by the unforeseen developments, as indicated above, led to areas of shortages in the country. The State Governments were advised to ensure equitable distribution of available products to different categories of consumers. They were also advised to accord the highest priority to agriculture so that the demand of HSD for agriculture sector could be met. They were further asked to take stern action against blackmarketing and other such malpractices as per the powers available to them under the Essential Commodities Act and the Rules framed thereunder or under the provisions of Prevention of Black-marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act. The oil companies were advised to maintain constant liaison with the State Governments and to extend all possible help for ensuring equitable distribution of available products.

Though the refineries at Gauhati and Digboi have started operating recently, the refineries at Bongaigaon and Barauni remain closed. The closure of Barauni refinery continues to have its adverse effects on availability of HSD and kerosene in areas fed by this refinery. Keeping in view the critical requirement of HSD in the month of March for the rabi crops, the whole matter has again been examined in consultation with the Railways and other authorities and a number of decisions of far-reaching importance have been taken for maximizing the supplies of the product in the month of March. Some of the decisions are as follows:—

- (i) The three Fertilizer units at Nangal, Barauni and Sindri were closed down in order to divert wagons, which would otherwise have moved fuel oil, to the carriage of diesel.
- (ii) New tanks wagons have been pressed in to service to improve the total movement,

- (iii) The movement of trains carrying petroleum products have been speeded up to the extent possible and the movement is being monitored round the clock by a special cell in the Railway Board.
- (iv) The oil companies have also maximized movement of product by road.
- (v) Maximum use is being made of the Haldia-Barauni-Kanpur pipeline for the movement or imported diesel.
- (vi) The import of diesel has also been stepped up so that there is no problem of availability of the product at the port locations.

It is estimated that as a result of these steps it would be possible to supply diesel during March at a level 9 per cent higher than the sales in March 1979. The growth rate cannot, however, be even in all parts of the country, but special emphasis has been given for additional supplies to the States with extensive rabi cultivation. As regards the north-eastern States, the supplies would inevitably depend upon the continued functioning of the refineries in Assam and it should be possible to meet the demand in these areas if the refineries function normally.

As regards kerosene, the allocations of the product to the different States and Union Territories had been maintained until February 1980 at the level of actual sales in the corresponding months in the preceding year. This had to be done in view of difficult availability of the product in the international market and the transportation constraints. It needs to be mentioned in this connection that about 45 per cent of the total consumption of kerosene in the country is to be imported from outside. The closure of the three refineries in Assam and the Barauni refinery in Bihar, which produce among themselves about 33,000 tonnes of kerosene a

[Shri Virendra Patil]

month, also affected kerosene supplies in the areas fed from these refineries. After a review of the situation, it has been decided to make allocations of kerosene to the States and Union Territories for the month of March 1980 at a level 10 per cent higher than the actual sales in March 1979.

We will continue to do our best to maximize supplies of HSD and kerosene in the country. The situation, however, will improve significantly as soon as Barauni refinery starts functioning fully and normal operations in the three refineries in Assam are also resumed

श्री कमला मिश्र मधुकर : डीजल और कैरोसीन तेल के बारे में मंत्री महोदय का जो बयान आया है यह बहुत ही निराशाजनक है। यह इनकी और से कहा जाता था कुछ महीने पहले कि चूंकि जनता राज्य है इसलिए डीजल और कैरोसीन आयल का अभाव है। अब इंदिरा राज्य भी आ गया है लेकिन फिर भी स्थिति में कोई अन्तर नहीं पड़ा है और स्थिति और भी खराब हो गई। इस भयावह स्थिति का आपके बयान से जरा भी आभास नहीं मिलता है। गावों के किसान पेट्रोल पम्पों पर मारे मारे फिर रहे हैं। दिन भर फिरते हैं लेकिन उनको डीजल नहीं मिलता है। सुबह से शाम तक बेचारे भागते दौड़ते रहते हैं भूख रहते हैं लेकिन डीजल नहीं मिलता है। वे बी० टी० ए० के यहाँ जाते हैं लेकिन डीजल नहीं मिलता जिला अधिकारियों पास जाते हैं लेकिन उनके लिए कोई डीजल का प्रबन्ध नहीं किया जाता है। एम० एल० ए० और एम० पी० के पास भी जाते हैं लेकिन वे कहा से इसका प्रबन्ध कर सकते हैं। स्थिति बहुत ही भयावह है। डीजल के अभाव में आज किसानों के ट्रैक्टर बन्द पड़े हैं। ट्रैक्टर चल नहीं रहते हैं। सारा कारोबार ठप्प पड़ा है। डीजल के वास्ते पेट्रोल पम्पों पर लम्बी लम्बी कतारें लगी रहती हैं लेकिन नहीं मिलता इसके विपरीत यदि आप ब्लैक मार्किट में इसकी कीमत आठ दस रुपये देने के लिए तैयार हो जाते हैं तो आपको यह मिल जाता है। किसान को जलाने के लिए कैरोसीन आयल नहीं मिलता है। गांव तेल के अभाव में गंवर पड़े हैं। ऐसा मालूम होता है जैसे वहाँ ब्लैक आउट हो गया हो। जिस तरह से लड़ाई के जमाने में ब्लैक आउट हुआ करता था उसी तरह से ऐसा मालूम पड़ता है कि आज कल भी गांवों में ब्लैक आउट है। मजदूर दिन भर काम करता है लेकिन रात को जब घर जाता है तो उसके पास दिया जलाने के लिए तेल नहीं होता है। उसको मोमबत्ती खरीद कर

रोशनी करनी पड़ती है। इसके दान भी बहुत ज्यादा बढ़ गए हैं। इंदिरा राज के बावजूद भी आज शोपिंगों में रोशनी नहीं है। कितनी बड़ा बह स्थिति है क्या इसका आपने मूल्यांकन किया है? क्या आपने हिसाब लगाया है कि देश में डीजल की कितनी खपत है कैरोसीन आयल की कितनी खपत है पहले कितनी थी और आज कितनी है और आने वाले समय में कितनी उसकी जरूरत होगी? आज बिहार में कुछा पड़ा हुआ है। बहुत से हिस्सों में गेहूं और मकई की फसल जो अच्छी हो सकती थी डीजल के अभाव में वह मारी गई है। करोड़ों रुपये की फसल मर गई है। आप ने अपने बयान में कहा है कि आपने राज्य सरकारों को आदेश दिया है कि आवश्यक वस्तु अधिनियम के तहत जमा खोरों को सजाएं दी जाएं। बिहार में राष्ट्रपति शासन है। क्या मंत्री महोदय बताएंगे कि अब इन वस्तुओं की इतनी ब्लैक मार्किटिंग हो रही है डीजल और कैरोसीन आयल की हो रही है तो कितने व्यापारियों को अपने इस अपराध के तहत पकड़ा है और उनके खिलाफ क्या कार्यवाही की है? बिहार में डीजल और कैरोसीन आयल का बटवारा सही ढंग से हो रहा है राष्ट्रपति शासन के तहत इसको देखने के लिए क्या आपने कोई उपयुक्त व्यवस्था की है?

ऐसे ही मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि सरकार ने डीजल की चोर बाजारों रोकने के लिए कौन कौन सी कार्यवाहिया की हैं ताकि बी० टी० ए० या अन्य अधिकारियों को जो कि चोर बाजारियों से मिले हुए हैं उचित सजा दी जा सके और अधिकारियों की मिली भगत को रोका जा सके?

MR. SPEAKER: You are making it too long. Please wind up.

श्री कमला मिश्र मधुकर : मैं इसलिए बता रहा हू कि एक बी० टी० ए० के यहाँ डीजल पकड़ा गया है। क्या आपने इसका पता लगाया है कि बिहार को कितने कोटे की आवश्यकता है और उसके कितने कोटे की आपूर्ति की गई है? डीजल और कैरोसीन आयल की आपूर्ति को बढ़ाने के लिए किन किन देशों को एप्रोच किया है जिस से पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों को मंगाया जा सके और बिहार की मांग की पूर्ति की जा सके?

MR. SPEAKER: This is a catalogue of questions. This is not a question: it is a catalogue. I will not allow this. You are taking up so much time. Other people also want to ask questions. This is too much.

श्री कमला मिश्र मधुकर : आपने प्रसंग की चर्चा की है। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि प्रसंग की स्थिति कब तक सुधर जाएगी ताकि डीजल और मिट्टी के तेल की अफ़्साई बढ़ सके?

श्री बीरेन्द्र पाटिल : माननीय अध्यक्ष जी माननीय सदस्य ने जो कहा है कि देश के घर-घर बहुत भयानक स्थिति है मैं इसे मानने के लिए तैयार नहीं हूँ।....

(Interruption.)

MR. SPEAKER: Are you the Minister in charge? (Interruptions.)

Let him make his statement first. (Interruptions)

I don't know why you are trying to answer all the questions. Let him answer. First hear him and then draw your conclusions.

श्री बीरेन्द्र पाटिल : मैं यह नहीं कह रहा हूँ कि देश के घर-घर काफी डीजल और मिट्टी का तेल है। लेकिन जो माननीय सदस्य ने कहा कि परिस्थिति बहुत भयानक है उसके बारे में मेरा कहना है कि ऐसी स्थिति नहीं है।....

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Varma, are you taking over charge? (Interruptions.)

Have the Members assumed charge of everything? Hon. Members, this is your House. You must listen to him first and then draw your conclusions and if necessary some more questions may be asked. He has not replied as yet. Don't draw your conclusions before he has said anything. Let him have his say, and then ask questions.

श्री फूल चन्द्र वर्मा (शाजापुर) : डीजल की गम्भीर समस्या है मंत्री जी उसकी गम्भीरता को समझ नहीं पा रहे हैं !

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seats. Please, Mr. Varma. He has to explain. If you are not satisfied....

श्री फूलचन्द वर्मा मेरा निवेदन यह है कि वह सदन को प्रमित कर रहे हैं।

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. I am standing. When the Speaker stands, you have to listen to him. You must maintain some decorum. Mr. Varma, you are going out of bounds. First listen to him. If you are not satisfied, then you may put questions. He may be able to

justify what he is saying. Let him say what he wants to. You have had your say.

श्री बीरेन्द्र पाटिल : इसलिए मैं सबस्यगण से यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि अगर हम लोग यह कहें कि भयानक वातावरण है भयानक वातावरण है तो इसका परिणाम यह होगा कि जब देश में शार्टेज का एक वातावरण पैदा हुआ है, और शार्टेज है मैं यह नहीं कहता कि शार्टेज नहीं है तो मैनटेनेन्स यही रहेगी। अगर किसी को मालूम हो कि जब चाहे पैट्रोल डीजल या कैरोसीन आयाल मिल सकता है तो फिर स्टोरेज की आवश्यकता नहीं रहती है। हम देख रहे हैं कि हमारे सप्लाई करने के बावजूद भी एक मैनटेनेन्स यह है कि बहुत से लोग समझते हैं कि आयाल मिलेगा, पता नहीं कल मिलेगा कि नहीं, इसलिए पहले ही स्टोरेज कर लें, तो इसका एक कारण यह है। (व्यवधान)

दूसरा एक कारण यह है कि जब कभी भी शार्टेज होती है तो एन्टी सोशल एलीमेंट्स इससे फायदा उठाते हैं। मैंने यह नहीं कहा है कि ब्लैक मार्केटिंग नहीं हो रही है मैं तो यह कह रहा हूँ कि शार्टेज होने की वजह से उन पर कन्ट्रोल करना बहुत मुश्किल हो जाता है।

इसीलिए हमने बार बार कहा है कि स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स में आपके पास काफी पावर्स हैं उनका इस्तेमाल कीजिए जो ब्लैक मार्केटिंग करते हैं उनको पकड़िये और उनपर ऐसन्सियल कमोडिटीज एक्ट के तहत कार्यवाही कीजिए। (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Varma, you are going out of bounds. Whatever he is saying should be struck off the record. He is saying without my permission. (Interruptions)*

श्री बीरेन्द्र पाटिल : मैंने यह कहा है कि पी० टी० एक्ट की आपके पास काफी पावर्स हैं, इग० नह० आप उनका उपयोग कीजिए। एक अधिस्टेट ऐसी है जो इसका उपयोग करने के लिए तैयार नहीं है। अगर वह इसका उपयोग करने के लिए तैयार नहीं है, अगर वह अपनी पावर्स का इस्तेमाल नहीं करना चाहते हैं, तो हम मजबूर हो जाते हैं।

जहाँ तक सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट का ताल्लुक है, हम तो एनोकेट करते हैं, सप्लाई करते हैं और देखते हैं कि वह ठीक तरह से डिस्ट्रीब्यूट होता है या नहीं। डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन को स्टीम साइन करने की जिम्मेवारी स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स की होती है। (व्यवधान)

श्री कमल चन्द्र वर्मा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरा व्यवस्था का प्रश्न है।

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Varma, please take your seat. I will explain. I know the position.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I have not yet completed.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is asking about certain specific States which are under President's rule. He says that you are responsible for those States. You may please answer him on that.

श्री वीरेन्द्र पाटिल : मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि हम लोगों ने टेलीक्स मैसेजेज भेजे हैं, हमने सिविल सप्लाइज के मिनिस्टर्स की कान्फरेंस की है, प्राक्सिस की कान्फरेंस की है। मैंने अपने स्टेटमेंट में पढ़ा है कि हमने क्या क्या स्टेप लिए हैं।

एक सवाल माननीय सदस्य ने पूछा है कि जो स्टॉक है, उसको भीट करने के लिए आपने क्या कदम उठाये हैं? मैं यह कह सकता हूँ कि 2.8 मिलियन टन एच० एस० डी० और 8.7 मिलियन टन कैरोसीन आयल हम लोग 1980 में इम्पोर्ट कर रहे हैं, उसका इन्तजाम हो गया है।

जहाँ तक बिहार की सलाई का ताल्लुक है, वह आँकड़े भी मैं माननीय सदस्य को दे दूँगा। बिहार की एच० एस० डी० की मेलजब जनवरी में 28,373 एम० टी० थी

फरवरी के फिगरज मेरे पास नहीं हैं। मार्च के लिए एलोकेशन 36,000 एम० टी० था। जहाँ तक कैरोसीन का सम्बन्ध है, जनवरी, 1980 में 13,510 एम० टी, फरवरी में 5,138 एम० टी० और मार्च में 18,147 एम० टी० था।

श्री कमला निधि मधुकर : अध्यक्ष महोदय, कुछ प्रश्नों का जवाब नहीं दिया गया है। मैंने पूछा है कि बिहार में ब्लैक मार्केटिंग हो रहा है, उसको रोकने के लिए सरकार ने कौन सा कदम उठाया है। (व्यवधान)

श्री रामाबल्लार शास्त्री (पटना) : कितने लोगों को गिरफ्तार किया गया है? (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Whoever speaks without my permission will not be recorded at all.

Mr. Saha.

*SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA (Vishnupur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, in reply the hon. Minister has said that there is no shortage of diesel or kerosene in the country. The Minister who was in charge of this Ministry earlier had stated that the shortage was due to the disturbances in Assam and I would therefore like to know from the Minister by what time they will be able to solve the Assam problem and I would hope that the problem is solved properly.

Sir, I would like to point out that the State Government has nothing to do with the supply of kerosene or diesel. It is the responsibility of the Central Government. The West Bengal Government distributes whatever quota they get from the Centre. During December, 1977 and February 1980, the West Bengal Government had demanded 40,000 tons of kerosene but as against this the Centre had supplied in December—39,973 tons, in January 1980—31,878 tons and in February 1980—26,452 tons. But you find that in a State like Gujarat where population is less than that of West Bengal, the supply of kerosene during January 1980 was 33,858 tons, thus if the States do not get their supplies according to their demand how would they be able to distribute the same equitably.

In regard to diesel we find that during January 1980 supplies made to West Bengal was 53,000 tons, Maharashtra 1,04,000 tons, Tamilnadu 66,300 tons, Gujarat 52,600 tons. During February 1980 West Bengal got 48,740 tons and Gujarat got 53,100 tons. I would like to know the reasons for this discrimination.

MR. SPEAKER: Please make it short.

At this stage some persons from the Visitors' Gallery shouted some slogans and threw some leaflets on the floor of the House.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA: Sir, some time back the former Minister Shri P. C. Sethi, had met our Chief Minister. I would like to quote from Business Standard dated 6th March 1980 which said something about it.

MR. SPEAKER: This is a statement. Please try to be brief. You are going too far now.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA: Not too far Sir, I have two questions.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: For Call Attention 45 minutes are allotted in total for five members and he is trying to get his 7 minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: It is more than 7 minutes—Mr. Bosu, for your information.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA: Sir I read:

"The pronouncements of the Union Minister for Petroleum and Chemicals Mr. P. C. Sethi, on the West Bengal government's decision to ration diesel and kerosene are decidedly odd. His opposition to the measure is on two grounds—that it will lead to black marketing and that the question comes under the Centre's jurisdiction."

*SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA: Sir, the steps that the State Government have taken for diesel rationing,.....

MR. SPEAKER: You must give some time for others also. You should have only one question and not a catalogue of questions.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA: This is my last question. "It should be obvious, particularly in the case of an item like kerosene, that rationing is the only practicable way of ensuring equal and fair distribution." The editorial also speaks about black marketing. It says: "Indeed, black-marketing of both diesel and kerosene are already flourishing in the absence of effective rationing."

These things are happening because there is no rationing.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether with a view to achieving equal distribution of diesel and kerosene, the Central Government propose to introduce rationing in the States.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: Sir, the hon. Member wanted to know when the Assam situation is going to improve. On that I am not in a position to make an statement because it is a political problem and so, a political solution has to be found out for this problem. I fully share the anxiety of the hon. Member that because of the agitation that is going on in Assam, the entire country is suffering; every common man is suffering in this Country to-day because of the closure of the refineries and because we were not getting crude oil from Assam to Barauni. We are feeling and we are experiencing this shortage. That is why only recently our Prime Minister had a meeting with all the political leaders. I want to make it very clear that unless the situation or crisis in Assam is resolved, it is not possible for us to fully meet the requirements in the North-Eastern region. I am making it very clear that this is not only the responsibility of the party in power to find a solution but also in this connection I seek the co-operation of the hon. Member to find out a solution. I can assure the hon. Member that the moment the position in Assam improves and the crisis is resolved, 90 per cent of the shortage

[Shri Veerendra Patil]

that we are experiencing here in this country will be over and there won't be much difficulty at all.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY POSU (Diamond Harbour): A very bold statement!

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: So far as distribution is concerned it will not be the responsibility of the Central Government whose responsibility is only to make the allocation to different States. But how they distribute within the States it is the responsibility of the respective State Governments. That I want to make it very clear.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA: But, what about the allocation?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I will give you the figures about the allocations also because you have come out with a point saying that we are not properly distributing it within the State. How can we, sitting here in Delhi, distribute in West Bengal? It is the job of that Government. (*Interruptions*) We wanted to make it more clear that so far as distribution is concerned, it is not our responsibility (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. All of you please sit down. You are not permitted.

(*Interruptions*) ** ** *

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded.

You have not answered the specific question.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I have not yet completed.

MR. SPEAKER: You complete it.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: When I complete, if any question is unanswered, you can refer it to me at that time.

I have not yet completed.

The hon'ble Member said, if I heard correctly, because he spoke in Bengali and I do not know Bengali, that blackmarketing is going on in West Bengal. If black-marketing is going on in West Bengal, how do you hold the Central government responsible for that?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA: I have not said so.

MR. SPEAKER: He wants a specific answer about the allocations to each State.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I will come to that point. The hon'ble Member was anxious to know about the allocations. In West Bengal the sales of HSD for the month of January was 50,619 MT and the sales for the month of February was 50,078 MT. Allocation of HSD for the month of March is 61,000 MT.

Sir, I have got the statement about the other States ready with me. As it will unnecessarily take time of the House, if the hon'ble Member wants, I am prepared to place it on the Table of the House. If the members want me to read, I am prepared to do so. I would like to say that there is no discrimination done.

(*Interruptions*) **

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record without my permission.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: Sir, the figures for the month of January and February relate to the sales of HSD in West Bengal. It is not paper allocation. So far as the month of March is concerned, I have given the allocation figures as I will get the

sales figure only in the month of April.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO (Dhenkanal): Sir, while congratulating the Minister that in his maiden speech he has given a very lucid and illuminating answer whereby he has enumerated the reasons for the shortage, I would say he has also enumerated the steps which have been suggested by the Central Government to various State governments for taking action against people who are creating artificial scarcities in which case the State governments have been very sloppy at the moment; thirdly, he has also enumerated the steps to increase the supply as compared to last year depending heavily on imports from friendly countries, viz., the OPEC countries which have no uniform price policy. I would like to know—

(a) What is the criteria for supplying these items to the various states especially these which have an ambitious rabi programme like the State of Orissa, which has deficient irrigation facilities?

(b) What steps are now being contemplated to streamline and monitor the distribution system which is very sloppy, especially in my State today?

(c) What is the quantum and the cost of imports done last year, that is, 1979-80? What is the projection for the year 1980, as far as cost and quantum is concerned?

(d) What steps he has taken to curb the consumption and reduce the imports, to increase the self-reliance in the country?

My last point is this. The hon. Minister has said that top priority will be given to agriculture. I would like to know from him that keeping the geo-political and the geo-strategic environment into consideration, what is the priority given and what are the steps taken for meeting the defence requirements, that is, the Army,

Navy and Air Force, as far as diesel and kerosene are concerned.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: So far as the Defence requirement is concerned, if my information is correct, it is fully met. There is absolutely no difficulty about the defence requirements. The hon. Member wanted to know what steps have been taken to import these items. The position is this.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: I did not want to know 'What steps are being taken for importing'—because I know fully well that you are importing. I only wanted to know about the 'quantum' and also about 'cost'. That is what I wanted to know.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I am coming to his point. So far as importing is concerned, in 1979, I think, we have imported 17 million tonnes. So far as 1980 is concerned, we have firmed-up for importing 16.5 million tonnes of crude oil after taking into account the indigenous production of 14.7 million tonnes. The total crude through-put in the country is expected to be 31.2 million tonnes in 1980. So, that is the position.

About distribution, I have already made it clear. So far as distribution is concerned, it is not our responsibility. It is the responsibility of the State Governments.

And, Sir about the price and all those things, I think, it is not in the public interest to say now at what price we are importing oil from other countries.

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR (Gorakhpur): There is acute crisis in respect of diesel and kerosene throughout the country. We have discussed this matter here already and Members have also spoken. Therefore I do not want to state the same thing in detail at this stage. What I want to bring up for the

[Shri Harikesh Bahadur]

attention of the hon. Minister and the House is this. These items are being very badly misused by the Government machinery also today. Diesel is being misused by the Government machinery. There must be some restrictions imposed by the Government on them also so that this cannot be misused. I don't know what steps have been taken in this regard. Sir, the large-scale blackmarketing and hoarding of diesel and kerosene has really created great difficulty for the poor people of the country and the farmers—especially in U.P. particularly in the region to which I belong, Eastern U.P. Sir, in Eastern U.P. people are not at all getting kerosene oil. Wherever it is available it is being sold at Rs. 8 per litre. (Interruptions) Even more than that. I would like to know from the Minister as to what steps the Government proposes to take to impose some restrictions on the use of diesel in the Government machinery also. I would like him to spell out the steps taken in this regard. My second point is this. In spite of the fact that the Centre has asked State Governments to take stringent action against black-marketeers, and also hoarders, I am sorry to state that the provisions under the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Essential Commodities Act, are not being properly enforced. Will the Hon'ble Minister let the House know what he is going to do in order to activate the State Governments in these matters?

15 hrs.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: The hon. Member has brought to my notice that even the Government officials are misusing the diesel that is supplied to them. So far as our Ministry is concerned, we have not received any such complaints so far. If Government officials in a particular state are misusing diesel oil, we can only tell the State Government

to take stern action against the Government officials. (Interruptions) We from here cannot take any disciplinary action and it is very difficult to find out whether any particular Government official is misusing the diesel that is supplied to him. About blackmarketing, I have already replied. (Interruptions) Sir, so far as Eastern U.P. is concerned, I agree that there is a shortage of these items. (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions) **

15.02 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) WORKING AND ADMINISTRATION OF FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT (Rajgarh): I beg to bring the following matter of urgent public importance to the notice of the House under Rule 377.

The Food Corporation of India is being run at staggering operational cost which is almost equal to procurement price of foodgrains and the marginal profits in the Balance Sheets of the Food Corporation of India is a manipulated picture to cover huge losses covered through large subsidies from the Government. The budgeted subsidy for 1978-79 was to the tune of Rs. 570 crores. The top-heavy administration, the high cost of sale of procured foodgrains lead to a 95 per cent mark-up on the procurement price paid to the producer making the entire system commercially non-viable. The F.C.I. is deriving more margin out of the grain sales than officially allowed. These are clear indications that the manpower in F.C.I. is not fully employed and productivity per person has gone