

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER :
No point of order.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (Shri Kedar Panday) :
I shall make a statement later.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Anand Gopal Mukhopadhyay.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU :
Sir, I have a point of order on this.

SHRI KEDAR PANDAY : I shall make a statement later on.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU :
They are going to import it.

SHRI KEDAR PANDAY : I shall make a statement some day regarding this.

(viii) DIFFICULTIES OF ROLLER FLOUR MILLS IN WEST BENGAL

SHRI ANNDA GOPAL MUKHOPADHAY (Asansol) : The roller flour mills in West Bengal are facing acute difficulties and unless immediate remedial measures are taken, some of them are likely to be closed down shortly throwing hundreds of employees out of job and jeopardising production in a serious manner.

Sir, prior to 1980 wheat allotted by the Central Government was re-allotted by the State Governments to the respective flour mills on the basis of their capacity. However, this basis for allotment was changed in August, 1980. According to the guidelines formulated by the Centre, the State Governments were requested to sub-allot wheat to flour mills on the basis of the "average actual rate of milling in the recent past rather than licensed or installed capacity". The States were further advised that in computing the performance, three years performance, i.e., for the period ranging from 1978 to 1980 was to be taken into consideration and added to this, local factors and cir-

cumstances, viz, load shedding, financial resources, strikes etc. were also to be taken into consideration. The Centre also suggested that a Committee be appointed which would oversee the distribution system and also presumably take remedial measures as and when necessary in solving problems as they cropped up.

The West Bengal Government accepted the guideline, but while trying to implement the same, violated the very essence of the guideline, i.e. instead of three years' performance, they have introduced only one year's performance and the Committee suggested by the Centre was also not formed. This vital distortion in implementing the guideline has created a very difficult situation for the smaller mills and the supplies are now being cornered by the big mills only. The disparity has become so acute and appealing that while the big mills have on the basis of their performance been given 150% of their capacity, the smaller mills have been given only 10% of their sanctioned capacity. Since it is wholly uneconomical to operate at this low supply, one mill has already closed down and 22 others are likely to follow suit shortly unless some remedial measures are taken.

The inherent drawbacks of the performance basis lies in the fact that the smaller mills because of their lack of financial resources, milling capacity etc. would always remain far behind in the race when compared with the bigger mills who have better capacity, better financial resources, manpower etc. Since a mill can crush only as much as is allotted to it and as it cannot make any open market purchase, under the present system the bigger mills will keep on enjoying the benefit at the cost of the smaller mills. Incidentally, it may be mentioned in this connection that this principle of distribution on the basis of performance is applicable only in West Bengal and all other States are still following the time-honoured principle of allocation on the capacity basis.

[Shri Ananda Gopal Mukhopadhyay]

I would, therefore, request the Minister for Agriculture :—

- (i) That he may kindly take up the matter with the West Bengal Government and find out a solution of the present problem.
- (ii) since the Central directive of issuing wheat on the basis of performance is being followed in a truncated manner and is operating against the smaller mills in the State, it should be withdrawn and the earlier practice of issuing wheat on the basis of capacity as is still in vogue in other States should be re-introduced in West Bengal, and
- (iii) a Committee comprising of the representatives of the flour mills, West Bengal Government and the Central representative be formed who may look into the grievances of mills arising out of discriminatory allotment and take suitable and timely measures so that weaker mills are given adequate safeguards and justice.

Sir, this is a very important matter... **

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : According to the rules, all this will not go on record except what you have given.

12.30 hrs.

GENERAL BUDGET, 1981-82
GENERAL DISCUSSION—Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House will now take up further general discussion of the General Budget. Mr. P.V.G. Raju may continue his speech.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat) : I want to know when the hon. Minister is likely to reply. It will be helpful.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : To-morrow only.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Will it be to-day or to-morrow ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN) : I am at the disposal of the House. If the House wants to have the whole day for the debate, I shall reply to-morrow. If the House is prepared to hear me at 5 O' Clock I am ready for it.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Muzaffarpur) : I think reply may be fixed for to-morrow.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Then I would make one request. Immediately after the Question Hour I may reply and the Calling Attention may be taken thereafter.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : After Zero Hour and not Question Hour.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN : I will reply after Question Hour.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : After Zero Hour.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN : You fix the time at 2 O' Clock.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : All right, at 2 O'Clock.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : 2 O'Clock will be all right.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN : At 2 O'Clock I will reply. (Interruptions)

**Not recorded.