

12.04 hrs.

RELEASE OF MEMBER

MR. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received the following wireless message dated 7th April, 1981 from Additional S.P., North Baraset District 24 Parganas, West Bengal to-day:—

"I have the honour to inform that today (7/4/81) Shri Ashoke Sen, Lok Sabha Member participated in law violation movement organised by Congress (I) a Baraset and was arrested U/S 151 Cr. P.C. He was produced before Sub-Divisional Executive Magistrate, Basaset and was discharged forthwith by Sub-Divisional Executive Magistrate, Baraset".

12.05 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS**TWENTY-FIRST REPORT**

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN (Madras North): Sir, I beg to present the Twenty-first Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

12.05 hrs.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**EIGHT AND THIRTEENTH REPORTS**

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV (Azamgarh): Sir, I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the public Accounts Committee:—

(1) Eight Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Seventh Report (Sixth Lok Sabha) on Valuation of Immovable Properties.

(2) Thirteenth Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eighty-first Report (Sixth Lok Sabha) on Export of Defence Stores and Modernisation of Processes of Production in a Factory.

12.06 hrs.

ESTIMATE COMMITTEE**SEVENTH REPORT**

SHRI S.B.P. PATTABHAI RAMA RAO (Rajahmundry): Sir, I beg to present the Seventh Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Estimates Committee on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eighteenth Report of the Estimates Committee (Sixth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic Affairs (Banking Division)—Credit Facilities to Weaker Sections of Society and for Development of Backward Areas.

12.06 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC UNDERTAKING**FIFTEEN REPORT**

SHRI BANSI LAL (Bhiwani): Sir, I beg to present the Fifteenth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Public Undertakings on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifty-third Report of the Committee on Public Undertakings (Sixth Lok Sabha) on Air India-Commercial and Staff Matters (Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation).

12.07 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

SITUATION ARISING OUT OF AGITATION BY TOBACCO GROWERS IN MAHARASHTRA AND KARNATAKA DEMANDING REMUNERATION PRICES.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Commerce to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:—

The situation arising out of agitation by tobacco growers in Maharashtra and Karnataka demanding remunerative prices for tobacco and for elimination of malpractices by middlemen.

Sir, you had kept it suspended because the Minister of Agriculture was out of India.

MR. SPEAKER: Now they say that this is the baby of the Commerce Ministry.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: As a result, the Minister of Commerce has also gone out of India.

MR. SPEAKER: If you want, we can wait; he will be back tomorrow.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN). Mr. Speaker, Sir, It is with deep grief at the loss of lives resulting from the agitation of Beedi Tobacco farmers in Nippani that I rise to make this statement regarding the situation arising out of the agitation by the Beedi Tobacco growers in Maharashtra and Karnataka demanding remunerative prices for Beedi Tobacco and for elimination of malpractices by middlemen.

The Conference of Beedi Tobacco growers of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat held at Nippani on the 24th Feb. 1981 resolved to request the Central Government to start monopoly procurement of Beedi Tobacco or atleast declare minimum support prices of Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per Kg. quality-wise. This was subsequently followed by another communication in the first week of March, 1981 addressed to the Agriculture Minister that the Action Committee had decided to start "Rastha Roko Andolan" at National Highway No. 4 from 14th March, 1981 and if desired, they would come to Delhi for negotiations before 11th of that month. It is understood that an agitation was launched by the tobacco growers in Belgaum district from 14th March, 1981.

Price support operations by the Government cannot be seen in isolation. They have to be linked up with measures taken or proposed to be taken so as to prevent situations

of glut in future which might necessitate adhoc measures. The regulation of production is also essential in order that there is a balance between demand for the commodity with in markets and the total production.

Under the Tobacco Board Act, at present Government is empowered to regulate production only in respect of Virginia Tobacco. Accordingly, Government is vested with the responsibility of ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers, keeping in view the demand for virginia tobacco in India and abroad. Exercising this power, the Tobacco Board had, in Andhra Pradesh, regulated the area under cultivation of virginia tobacco this year and the result has been extremely encouraging inasmuch as out of the anticipated production of 100 thousand tonnes of virginia tobacco, bulk of the marketing is already over at prices above the minimum support price and even higher than the price obtained last year. No such power for regulating production of Beedi Tobacco has yet been vested in the Central Government.

One of the essential reasons for the unfortunate state of affairs in regard to production of Beedi Tobacco is that the total production is not in consonance with the demand for the same. If there is parity between demand and supply of beedi tobacco, the market can generally be expected to operate normally with some kind of an assurance for a reasonable price for the growers. In the years of over production, the prices tend to depress significantly to the detriment of the growers. It may be noted here that barring a small volume of exports, beedi tobacco is essentially consumed within the country.

The average production of beedi tobacco in the country is of the order of between 100 to 150 thousands tonnes, of which approximately 80 per cent is grown in Gujarat and the balance in Karnataka and Maharashtra. According to the projections

(Shri Khursheed Alam Khan)

made by the National Council of Applied Economic Research, the total estimated demand of beedi tobacco, for internal market as well as exports, during 1982-83 will be 133 thousand tonnes while there will be only marginal increase in subsequent years till 1988-89 when the demand would be 137 thousand tonnes. It is against this background that the need for an amendment of the Tobacco Board Act conferring powers for regulation of areas under beedi tobacco has to be viewed and a decision taken by Government.

There is no information available pointing out that there is at present a glut in the Beedi Tobacco market. For an item like beedi tobacco which is essentially meant for domestic consumption spread throughout the country and which does not have a large export market, it would not be practicable to have a monopoly procurement scheme. For fixing minimum remunerative prices, Government takes into consideration the report of the Agricultural Prices Commission. For Virginia Tobacco, minimum support prices have been fixed by Government in the light of the recommendations made by the Agricultural Prices Commission. For beedi tobacco, Agricultural Prices Commission has not been asked to make any study. Government would like to take a decision on the question of amending the Tobacco Act for regulation of the area under cultivation for beedi tobacco, before taking further decisions on minimum support prices. The question, however, whether any limited quantity of beedi tobacco could be purchased, as was done in 1978 by NAFED, will be looked into and a decision taken shortly.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, though the attention of the Minister, of the Government and of the House has been called to this burning problem in Nippani and other

parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra, it could be done only after 10,000 farmers had to face police-firing-unfortunately, as you have said in your statement, some farmers had to die. And the agitations are continuing.

The subject matter of this Call-Attention Motion is not the law and order situation in the States, but it is really the economic factors and the economic demands and, therefore, I would like to concentrate on those, and in the light of the statement that has been made by the hon. Minister, I would like to make certain queries.

The nature of the Call-Attention Notice is rather complex. It involves both the agricultural aspects as well as the commerce aspects. I am happy that both the Ministers are present; I am happy that they are sitting side by side, so that there will be coordination...

MR. SPEAKER: Not only that, on one bench.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: They are on the same bench because they happen to be in the same Government.

Sir, as far as the agitation is concerned, it is an agitation for remunerative prices for beedi tobacco. That is the root of the problem. The agitation and whatever has happened afterwards are only consequences. So it is necessary that we go to the root of the problem.

The most crucial aspect in this entire problem is the Tobacco Board which has been set up under the Indian Tobacco Board Act, 1975. Unfortunately or fortunately there are certain aspects and jurisdiction of this Tobacco Board which are overlapping with certain aspects of the Agricultural Prices Commission. I hope the hon. Minister will take note of that. To

some extent he has already taken note of that in the statement and he has given a hint that certain amendments are already needed and I hope that those amendments will be made.

According to this 1975 Indian Tobacco Board Act, the various objectives of this Act have been: (1) to regulate the production of tobacco, (2) promote grading at the farmer's level, (3) have constant watch on the price movements (not passively watch), (4) ensure fair and remunerative prices to the growers, (5) develop markets for the tobacco in India and abroad and lastly, to undertake research activities that would develop leaf tobacco industry.

Why has this Indian Tobacco Board Act of 1975 failed to a very great extent? It is because there are certain loopholes in this law and I hope the hon. Minister will have a second look at this Act, and he will try to propose certain amendments.

You will probably be shocked and surprised to know that Sections 10 and 11 of the Act provide that all functionaries in the tobacco industry including growers and exporters should get themselves registered with the Board. There is a clear and mandatory provision that all functionaries including growers and exporters have to be registered in terms of the provisions of the Act. But strangely enough, the domestic cigarette manufacturers are excluded from this restriction. Domestic cigarette manufacturers are totally excluded from this restriction. And a still stranger paradox is that, not only they have been excluded from these restrictions but they have been given representation on the Board. They can participate in the policy framing. They can take policy decisions. But, as far as restrictions are concerned, they are not responsible at all. Heads I win and tails you lose—that is the aspect as far as this law is concerned and because of this lacuna

and loophole in the law will find that a number of difficulties are created in the implementation of this Act.

As far as the composition of the Board is concerned, it is still more interesting. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he would like to re-examine this problem in depth and try to reconstitute the Board. As far as this Board is concerned, in this Board—that is the Tobacco Board, out of 22 Members including the Chairman, only 4 are representatives of the agricultural growers. Only 4 representatives. And manufacturers of cigarettes are excluded from the registration but they have received representation on the Board. They can participate in the policy formulation. I would suggest that out of the 22 Members of the Board, two-thirds should be representatives of growers and unless that is done, the will and aspirations of the growers and agriculturists will never get reflected into this Indian Tobacco Board at all. Now, that is one of the shortcomings of the Tobacco Board and I hope that the hon. Minister will consider this problem in depth.

As far as prices are concerned, the Act in Sec. A 2 (d) provides for fixation of minimum gradation and grade-wise prices for the purpose of exports. But it is completely silent about the fixation of grade-wise minimum prices for the farmer grades. Why is this paradox, Sir? You are an agricultural expert. Through you I would like to ask that question because that will gain certain weight. I would like to know...

MR. SPEAKER: Professor, have other questions been bypassed?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: No, Sir. But I wanted to stress this question more. Therefore, I referred to you.

[Prof. Madhu Dandavate]

Don't worry. I am going to refer to you still further. In the context of the Conference at Kolhapur, the National Agricultural Cooperatives Federation may be asked to purchase the biri tobacco so that the monopoly and big traders and businessmen can be completely ended. He has thrown a hint that he is willing to do that. But, I would request the hon. Minister to take the initiative and see that the NAFED is given the necessary responsibility so that the monopolies are completely eliminated.

Sir, the monopoly procurement has been demanded by the growers themselves and you have given this explanation that, for one type of tobacco, it might be possible but, for the biri tobacco, it will not be possible. Those who are experts in this particular field have come to the conclusion that you need not have this type of discrimination at all. Even the biri tobacco can be brought under the monopoly procurement and so, I would like to have a categorical answer whether Government will be willing to examine this problem in depth and come to a definite solution.

As far as the fixation of minimum prices is concerned, suggestions have been made by the growers organisations that for the first grade, it should be Rs. 15 per k.g., for the second grade, it should be Rs. 12 per k.g. and for the third grade, it should be Rs. 10 per k.g.

I would like to know whether you would be prepared to consider these suggestions that have been made by the organisations of the growers. I would very much like that Government should consider the problem of constructing their own warehouses and see that these facilities are made available. Not only that. You should also make it compulsory that the merchants and the businessmen must purchase from the Government Sales Godowns. If that is done, perhaps,

the malpractices by the middlemen can be eliminated.

The malpractices by the middlemen is one of the aspects of my call attention notice. Therefore, I have specifically referred to this particular problem.

MR. SPEAKER: Have you read it?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I have carefully gone through the statement that has been made by the hon. Minister. On very few occasions, we are able to get the statement in time. Fortunately, this is one such occasion when I was able to get at 11 O'clock the statement from the hon. Minister. I must congratulate the Minister. In this session, at no occasion has it happened that before we come to the House, we get a copy of it. Fortunately, I have got a copy of the statement. From this, I have been able to see what it says as far as production is concerned.

MR. SPEAKER: Should I give you another copy?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: No. As far as production is concerned, he has said that the difficulty would be created if there is over-production of biri tobacco.

Sir, if excess production is there—that is the plea that you are taking for bringing in biri tobacco under the monopoly procurement and also bringing it within the jurisdiction of Agricultural Prices Commission and also the Tobacco Board—I would like to make a concrete suggestion. I would like to have a good response from Government. I cannot make suggestions because this is a Call Attention; I must only ask questions. Therefore, the question is: what would be your response to my suggestion that wherever there is an excess of production, will the Government purchase the excess tobacco and use it for producing nicotine and fertilizers?

PROF. N. G. RANGA (Guntur): It should be stored.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: What is the use of storing it? Their contention is that if it is stored up, in that case, the prices will go down. That is one of the reasons. My constructive proposal is this. I want to get a constructive response from the hon. Minister because I know that the hon. Minister is a man of constructive policy and constructive spirit. I am sure that he is capable of responding to the constructive proposals and suggestions. Therefore, what I would like to know this: If there is excess of production of beedi tobacco, may I know whether the Government will utilise the same for producing Nicotine and Fertilizers?

Then, Sir, at present there is no representation for the grower on the Market Committee. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister would like to give adequate representation to the growers on the Market Committee. The cost of production is a very important factor and it has got to be properly assessed.

I would suggest that the Index of Prices for both industrial and agricultural products may be tagged together so that the purchasing capacity of the farmers is maintained equitably. This is a very concrete and positive suggestion which I am making. I am of the opinion that the same norms which the Government utilises while fixing up the prices of Industrial Products could equally be utilised for fixing up the prices of agricultural produce, including beedi tobacco. That is a concrete question which I would like to put to him.

Here, Sir, I would like to refer, with your permission, to one thing; there is nothing unparliamentary. Sir, we had the privilege of inviting you to inaugurate the Bharat, Krishak Samaj 20th Convention at Kolhapur and there you made a speech. I am referring to the Speaker, not to you, Mr. Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Bharat Krishak Samaj was speaking.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Speaker is the Speaker throughout the country, Sir.

PROF. N. G. RANGA: He was Chairman of Krishak Samaj.

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV (Azamgarh): You really spoke there.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (New Delhi): You seldom speak here.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: And when you spoke there, you tried to criticise the present structure of the Agricultural Prices Commission, Sir, you specifically made a concrete suggestion that the entire Agricultural Prices Commission must be reconstituted with better representation to the agriculturists. That is what hon. Speaker has suggested. So, I would like to ask this question through his mouth. May I know whether you would accept this suggestion which has been made by the hon. Speaker in that famous convention at Kolhapur? Not only that. As far as the growers are concerned and as far as the small traders are concerned,...

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY (Nizamabad): Please leave something to us also.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I will leave Sugar for him, Sir!

There must be liberalisation of credit. And here, I would like to give one important quotation dated 29th March, 1980. Mr. Sambasiva Rao had announced on the 29th March, 1980 that 'there was very good demand for tobacco from overseas' buyers, but stocks were not offered, for want of credit accommodation from commercial banks'. Mr. Rao had suggested that 'a credit of Rs. 100 crores should be given every season, instead of Rs. 40 crores as at present'. The Reserve Bank has not sent any directive in this respect. What is the thinking of the Government? Is the thinking of the Government in tune with the thinking of the hon. Speaker? Be-

(Prof. Madhu Dandavate)

cause, hon. Speaker, at this Kolhapur Conference very categorically said that as far as the industrial houses are concerned, the Reserve Bank has been very liberal and the banks have been very liberal, in extending credit facilities. But, when it comes to the agriculturists and the small farmers (particularly marginal farmers and small farmers) these credit facilities are not easily made available. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Government will see that these credit-worthiness norms are changed. If the Reserve Bank's credit facilities are made available, in that case, even export would be possible. I would like to point out to you that the problem of the beedi workers is closely related to the problem of the tobacco growers. And I am very happy to know that the workers and the agriculturists have forced a united front in Nipani and other parts of Karnataka. If the grower is able to get better price for the agricultural produce, it can percolate down to the agricultural labour. But beedi workers today are not able to get even the minimum wage. As far as these beedi workers are concerned, large sections of them are women. They are not able to get minimum wage. They are not able to get maternity benefits. They could not get many other facilities including credit facilities. So, they decided to have a satyagraha and they had to face a lathi-charge. I do not want to bring in here the details of it because that is a law and order problem and you cannot answer that.

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी (हिसार) : लोगों को मारा जा रहा है ।

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: When you become a Minister, you can reply to that.

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी : सवाल तो गोली से मारे जाने वालों का है । चाहे जहाँ कहीं मारे जाएं ।

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:

I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is not a fact that the profit of the beedi manufacturers per day is Rs. 35 lakhs and the Government gets an excise of Rs. 150 crores annually. In spite of this huge income, the beedi workers are not able to get a minimum wage, particularly the women are subjected to a great harassment. I hope the hon. Minister will take all the aspects into the account and some problems which are related the agricultural aspects, some problems which are related to the commerce aspect, both of them will be taken note of by the respective Ministers and I hope and trust that as indicated by himself, if necessary, certain amendments will be introduced in the Indian Tobacco Trade Act. I can assure you that wherever the kisans, the agriculturists and the common people are concerned and if they are able to gain by constitutional amendment—though the opposition is opposed to the Constitutional amendment, but do not take it for granted that we are opposed to this amendment also—whichever amendments are brought forward in favour of the common people, the Opposition will go all out for supporting them so that the interests of the agricultural workers will be safeguarded. I would like to know whether such amendments will be coming forward. I want a specific reply from the hon. Minister.

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:

Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Member, Prof. Madhu Dandavate. I know his high order of intellect and I really cannot match with his intellect, but still I would like to explain my view point and the view point of the Government. As I have stated in my statement, if necessary, the Tobacco Act will be looked into very carefully and whatever is necessary regarding the amendments will be considered and necessary action will be taken. I would also like to inform the hon. Member that there was already a Study Group which had been appoint-

ed to look into all aspects of this problem and they have already submitted a very comprehensive report containing about 165 recommendations which cover most of these aspects which the hon. Member has mentioned. Surely we would look into them and at the moment the report is under process and as soon as the processing is over, it would be possible for us to take a decision regarding some of the important recommendations of this Study Group.

Here in this particular Act, I would like to mention that the main thrust is about the Virginia tobacco and the hon. Member has referred to Sections 10 and 11 of the Act. I would also like to submit very humbly to the hon. Member that these Sections also pertain to the Virginia Tobacco in particular. Regarding some of the suggestions of the hon. Member, there also I would submit that they would be considered in so far as the Virginia tobacco is concerned and not the other tobacco.

As regards the overlapping between the functions of the Agricultural Prices Commission and the Tobacco Board, I assure the hon. Member and this August House that this will not be allowed and there will be no overlapping.

Regarding the representation of the growers, I think it is a valuable suggestion from the hon. Member and it would certainly be taken into consideration.

* Now, regarding the reorganisation of the Agricultural Prices Commission I suppose that my hon. colleague sitting here will make a note of it and certainly he will keep it in view.

Regarding registration also, it is basically about the Virginia tobacco, but when these recommendations of the Study Group are taken for consideration, I hope this will also be considered very seriously.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:
How is it that they are kept out of

registration, but they are allowed to remain on the Board and frame policy?

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:
This aspect will also certainly be considered. But I would submit very humbly that tobacco is not the only item. There is the chewing tobacco, the snuffing tobacco, as also the hooka tobacco which is particularly grown in my district. Taking all these tobaccos together, the dimensions of the problem will be so big and the financial implications colossal. Therefore, all this needs a study in depth and only then some conclusion can be arrived at.

With regard to the cost of production, I would like to share the information that I have, with the hon. Members. According to our information, the cost of production of beedi tobacco is Rs. 4.50 per kg., while the price that has been asked is Rs. 10 and Rs. 15 per kg. From this it is obvious that such a high price cannot be afforded because beedi is used and smoked by the people from the weaker section of the society and common people.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:
The cost is Rs. 1800 per acre.

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:
I have only mentioned the cost of a kilogram. I can check up about the cost per acre also.

As regards the recommendations of the Committee which met on the 24th of February, 1981, the suggestions that were made, were that the Government should take over the monopoly procurement of tobacco. Taking over monopoly procurement means provision of lot of infrastructure besides the financial implications. There should be adequate storage capacity; there should be available at least more than Rs. 100 to Rs. 125 crores for this purpose only. And then if monopoly procurement is resorted to in respect of beedi tobacco, how can we leave out the hooka tobacco, chewing tobacco or the snuffing tobacco.

(ShriKhursheed Alam Khan)

12.38 hrs.

(MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair)

As regards the prices of tobacco, the latest information that we have indicates that the prices have not fallen and there is no distress sale of tobacco. Therefore, there was no need for any agency to intervene in the purchase of tobacco. For instance, the cost of production of Virginia tobacco is only Rs. 7.50 per kg., and the minimum support price that has been fixed is Rs. 8.25 per kg. Therefore, when the production price of the beedi tobacco is Rs. 4.50 per kg., how we could fix the procurement price at Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 per kg. because that will really be an unrealistic approach to the whole problem... (*Interruptions*). I am placing the facts as I know them or as these have been made available to us.

Regarding representation of the growers in the marketing committee, in all these major tobacco growing States, the marketing committees are there and the State Governments have really to take more interest in this. We would also draw the attention of the State Governments that they should provide more representation in the marketing committees to the Tobacco growers.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: In your Statement on page 2, you have said that if there is no parity between demand and supply, then the remunerative prices or fair prices cannot be given. And you have said that over-production is a great problem sometimes. I have made a very concrete suggestion and have asked for your reaction whether you are prepared to utilise over-production for nicotine and fertiliser.

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN: Sir, this is a question which has to be looked into carefully by the experts as to whether Tobacco could be used as a substitute particularly for the manure which is used these days for

the various crops. This is a very important thing and about which it is difficult for me to give a definite answer at this moment.

SHRI BAPUSAHEB PARULEKAR: (Ratnagiri): Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, it was on 24th of February, as the statement mentions, that Tobacco growers of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat met and passed certain resolutions and made certain demands. Out of their demands only one has been referred to in the entire Statement. According to my knowledge there are 9-10 important demands made at the convention which I would like to inform the Hon. Minister some time later. It was after about 15 days in the first week of March, the Agricultural Minister was requested to consider their problem. They also made a request, as far as the Statement goes, that they are ready to come to Delhi and discuss and negotiate. I do not know why the request was not agreed to. They also informed the Government that they would be starting a non-violent agitation from 14th of February. As no response was given to the demand, or the request which they made they started the agitation on 14th; and from 14th to 6th of March the agitation was totally disciplined and non-violent as the Police Report also shows.

My respectful submission is that Government should have taken notice of the farmers' demand to sustain their faith that it was not necessary to give up non-violent means to attract the attention of the Government to the demands of the agitators.

I have gone through the Statement. But it seems that the real problem of the Tobacco growers has not been reflected in the Statement. The present agitation, which covers the Neppani belt on both sides of Karnataka and Maharashtra border comprises of 45 villages and about 25-30 thousand Tobacco growers are concerned with this particular problem. When this is the number of the

Tobacco growers who are concerned with this particular problem, I respectfully submit that had we given our attention to this problem earlier, the tragedy of the 6th could have been avoided. But apart from that we need not go in details of that aspect because the Calling Attention is restricted only to the economic matter of this particular issue.

The Hon. Minister has given certain figures. But with due respect, I am unable to agree with him because I have here a Statement of Mr. Sharad Joshi, who is President of this Sangathan, given on 31st March, 1981 wherein he said:

"The cost of production of Tobacco is Rs. 11.40 per Kg., but the price the farmers get ranges between Rs. 4 and Rs. 8 per Kg."

This is the latest figure published through a Statement of 30th March and which is reported in *Hindustan Times*. Therefore, we have to consider this problem. Not only this. May I ask the Hon. Minister through you, Sir, as to whether he knows that the fate of these 25—30 thousand Tobacco growers is controlled by 56 traders? And what do they do? They manipulate things to keep the prices low; and they play tricks, to rob the farmers of their dues. What steps does Government intend to take in this matter, when 56 traders control 30,000 tobacco growers in this part of this country; and with all tricks of the trade, these Tobacco growers are being looted? This aspect has been lost sight of, as I don't find a single word having been mentioned with reference to this.

This is not a new problem. In the year 1979, I find that the Mukherjee Committee was appointed—when Mr. Hitendra Desai was the Commerce Minister. They have made detailed statements, and detailed recommendations. I would ask the hon. Minister as to whether any of the recommendations made by the Mukherjee Committee have been implemented. Where is that particular

report? Has the report gone into cold storage?

The first problem, as I have understood it, is that the Tobacco growers are not only not getting a fair price for their produce, but they are also not getting the price within a reasonable time. I have some information which was supplied to me to-day, that some traders at Nippani buy tobacco from the farmers; they normally postpone payment for 6 to 8 months. And in some cases, payments are not made for 2 to 3 years. What steps can you take?

This is not all. The tobacco farmer becomes helpless. He has to give the produce to the same trader even if he does not get payment in time. He thinks that if the produce is not given for the next year, he will not get payment for the previous year. So, he delivers the produce. This vicious circle continues. There are hundreds of cases. I can give names. What steps are you going to take in this direction?

One of the Tobacco growers has asked a question. It is in paper before me; and I feel that the question posed is very relevant. I would request the hon. Minister to consider it very seriously. He says—I quote:

"Why the Tobacco Board which had assumed the powers to punish farmers for raising tobacco without permission could not raise its little finger against the traders, who would neither pay a fair price nor effect of releasing the market from the stronghold of monopoly interests. Could it not at least regulate them?"

What is the answer of the hon. Minister to this query—which has been made by one of our Tobacco farmers?

Against this background, I would like to make 7 or 8 suggestions. I would also ask, as Mr. Dandavate did, as to what is the response of Government to the suggestions which

[Shri Bapusaheb Parulekar] have come from Mr. Joshi and his Sangathan. The first particular demand that they have made is for fixing the support price for tobacco. With reference to this support price, I tried to contact the Government of Maharashtra to find out as to what is the support price fixed, as far as Maharashtra is concerned. Just now, I have received a telegram from the Chief Secretary, Maharashtra.

He says:

"No support prices have been fixed so far by the State Government as Agricultural Prices Commission, New Delhi have never called for data on cost of cultivation of tobacco crop."

I have received this at about 12.15. That is how we are functioning, and the farmers are being slaughtered, and they are losing their lives. What is Government going to do?

The second demand made at the Nippani Conference on 24th February was that the Government should direct NAFED and the Tobacco Board to see that the prices did not fall below that particular support price. This was the second demand that was made or the resolution that was passed. They also said that Government should take immediate steps for organising marketing of bidi tobacco. The present system of tobacco trade at the buyers' platforms is doing incalculable damage to the farmers because buyers underestimate the quality of tobacco and pay the lower price to farmers. I would like to ask through you from the hon. Minister whether the Government would consider introducing regulated markets with auction halls and godown for tobacco and sale and purchase of all tobacco should take place in the regulated market in addition to what Prof. Madhu Dandavate had suggested. The other suggestion which I would like to make is that in such regulated markets—in order that the Tobacco growers should get a good, reasonable and fair price—grading should be done

in those particular halls as per the farmers' grades so that it should be accepted by the experts, and quality tag should be fixed to each bundle of tobacco and then they should go to the market. That is also one of the demands. I am sorry to mention that, when so many demands have been made I find in the statement only one demand has been mentioned. After fixation of the minimum price for each grade of tobacco, they have suggested that the bundle should be put in the auction in the regulated markets for sale, and there should be a minimum price for tobacco. I underline it and I would like to emphasise this that if there is no buyer for the purchase of tobacco at the minimum price so fixed with the tobacco tag, then there should be some Government agencies to buy tobacco at the minimum price. That is also one of the suggestions which they have made through the resolution.

My esteemed colleague, Prof. Dandavate made certain suggestions about the Act. I want to make two or three suggestions about the Tobacco Board. Clear cut provisions in the Tobacco Board Act should be made to the effect that the price certificates or a clearance for the export should be given by the Tobacco Board after ascertaining that the dues payable to the farmers are cleared. This will compel the exporters to give a fair price. The Tobacco Board which has come into existence mainly to help the farmers does not provide adequate representation of farmers. The point had been made by Prof. Dandavate and I will not repeat that. But I may only add that in the other organisations like STC etc. provisions of representations of farmers should be made so that they can voice their grievances, and that Board should be a weighty Board of this particular farmers of the Tobacco grows.

These are various suggestions which have been made by this particular Sangathan.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You ask will the Government accept those suggestions.

SHRI BAPUSAHEB PARULEKAR:

Therefore, I would like to know whether the Government would accept those suggestions. I do not want a reply that these suggestions are for action and that they will be under consideration. They had been made long back. Some of them had been referred to the Mukherjee Committee. Two years have passed and no action has been taken. I would, therefore, like to know what immediate steps the Government propose to take in all the matters which I had referred to in my submissions.

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:

I am grateful to the hon. Member for making suggestions. In the first instance, I would like to explain that I have all those demands with me that were passed in the meeting held on 24th, but I did not read them out in order to save the time of the House. As regards the price of the bidi tobacco, I have the latest information also, and according to my information, the price is Rs. 10 per kg. Therefore, I would submit to the hon. Member to please check it up again. As far as I am concerned, I will also check it up on my side and then we will reconcile our findings later on.

As regards the marketing committees, I support these marketing committees, as I have already stated, should be more active and should take more interest in the welfare of the Tobacco growers, and they should be able to really do a great service, if they discharge their duties and responsibilities in a proper manner.

As I said, regarding monopoly procurement or the excess procurement of bidi tobacco or chewing tobacco or hookah tobacco, all this can be possible when the Government or the Tobacco Board has also the responsibility to regulate the acreage or the area under tobacco based on the requirement or estimated project for the requirement just as is done in the case of Virginia tobacco. In the case of Virginia Tobacco where the support price is also given, the first thing is that the regulation is there, the Board has the power to re-

gulate the area so that there is no excessive production. Otherwise later on it may reach the distress sale or a suggestion may be made that even the Virginia Tobacco may be used as a manure for fertilizer for other crops.

AN HON. MEMBER: It becomes costly also.

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:

Yes, it becomes costly also. Now, as regards the report about which the hon. Member has made a reference, I assure him that it has not been kept in cold storage. We believe in looking into things carefully because in such cases we do not accept them as an immediate challenge. It has to be looked into very carefully considering all the aspects, taking into consideration all the repercussions, taking into consideration all such matters which may require consideration, because doing things have to be taken into consideration, because doing things piece-meal will not be good. We have appointed an officer exclusively for this purpose and he is going through this report, and he is processing it and as I had already stated, I am sure that all the good recommendations which are in the interests of the growers will naturally be considered. The Government will be very keen to consider them again carefully.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani): But, how long will it take? He says that this has been going for the last two years.

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN: I would like to submit that two years had passed after the Committee was appointed. It is not that the report is being processed for the last two years. Now it is with us. We are processing it and we will try to... (interruptions) You know it is impossible to say that this will take only one week or one month. I assure you that we will not take more time than what is really necessary.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Ananda Pathak. Put a straight question. All points have been discussed. Everything has been stated.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You do not interfere. I am only requesting him. You spoil the case.

SHRI ANANDA PATHAK (Darjeeling): First of all, I would like to say that the statement which has been circulated to us lacks clarity. Because, I could not understand what the Minister meant by saying that the total production of beedi, tobacco is not in consonance with the demand for the same. What does it mean? Does it mean that the production is in short or is it in surplus? That is not clear here. And, secondly, I find that the Agricultural Prices Commission has not been asked to make a study of the beedi and tobacco industry. Why is it so? Whenever we ask a question about agricultural products the Government's reply is that the Agricultural Price Commission have fixed the rate. What can we do? Why was not this done for tobacco? The Government has not asked the Agricultural Prices Commission to fix some reasonable price. Therefore, I want a clarification regarding this also.

Now, the Government has expressed its total helplessness by stating that the Tobacco Board had been conferred powers for the regulation of the area under the beedi, tobacco and that the Government cannot take a decision. Why? It is a Central Act. Why should the Government not amend the Act and take the power to regulate the entire production, marketing—everything about tobacco?

Recently I read in the newspapers that the Government has sent a study team to that area. But when the leaders of the agitation are in jail, what can they do? They should have been sent much earlier. They could not contact them, they could not understand the problem and I think that they cannot submit any factual report.

13.00 hrs.

Therefore, it is high time that the problem should be discussed. Pending the amendment of this Act and the

reconstitution of the Board, they should be called here and the problems should be discussed with them and their minimum demands should be acceded to. Also, as has been already mentioned, they should not be compelled to sell their produce below the cost of production. A remunerative price should be given to them so that no tycoon can compel the farmers to sell their produce at throw-away price. As already stated by Mr. Parulekar, the cost of production is Rs. 11.40 P, but they are compelled to sell their product at Rs. 4. That is very horrible. At least a floor price should be fixed below which they would not be compelled to sell. The farmers are now forced to take money from the tycoons who dictate the price and everything and who squeeze them. To save the farmers, Government should advance liberal credit to them at cheaper interest, so that they can utilise the money for their agricultural operations. After the production is made, it should be purchased by Government agencies and agencies like marketing cooperatives at a floor price, which is not below the cost of production. These are my suggestions and I hope the Minister will take note of them and will reply to them.

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:

In the first instance, I am sorry if the hon. member has not been able to understand something of what I have said in the statement. If I had not been able to explain properly, it is my mistake. There I have tried to explain whatever is necessary to be explained. As regards the cost of production being Rs. 11, if it is Rs. 11, I am sure you cannot buy the beedi at the price at which you are getting it today. So, as I stated earlier, the cost of production is not that high as has been stated by the hon. member. As regards the amendment which the hon. member has mentioned, I have already replied to the other hon. members that this matter is receiving attention. Particularly where it is necessary to regulate the production of tobacco of various kinds, it will be

necessary to equip the Tobacco Board with necessary powers to ensure that they can also regulate the production, so that production would be in consonance with the requirement. It should not be in excess so that it may be used as manure. That is what I have tried to explain that it should be in consonance with the requirement of tobacco. The Agricultural Prices Commission is always seized of this matter. But reference can be made to them only when there is also a provision that we can regulate the arrangement under tobacco. Then only can we request the APC to consider the fixation of minimum price. The rest of the questions raised by the hon. member are almost identical, to which I have already replied.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Shivkumar Singh,

श्री शिव कुमार सिंह ठाकुर (खंडवा) :
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, दो बजकर पांच मिनट पर ले लीजिए। इसमें समय लगेगा।

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Put your question.

श्री शिव कुमार सिंह ठाकुर : बहुत महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न है, इसमें समय लगेगा। सभी जाने की जल्दी में हैं। दो बजकर पांच मिनट पर ले लीजिए।

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You leave that to me. Are you putting your question or not?

श्री शिव कुमार सिंह ठाकुर : वह तो मैं पूछ ही रहा हूँ।

माननीय उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्ताव जो आया है वह बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है। चूँकि ला ऐंड आर्डर स्टेट सब्जेक्ट है इसलिए उस पर हमें विचार नहीं करना है, केवल किसानों के लिए रेग्युलरेटिव प्राइसेज क्या हों, उस पर विचार करना है। आज हम देखते हैं कि जो उपभोक्ता हैं उनके हित के लिए सेन्ट्रल गवर्नमेंट कानून बनाती है लेकिन

उसका सीधा लाभ उपभोक्ताओं को नहीं मिलता है। एक ओर हमारे उत्पादक हैं, किसान हैं उनको भी अपने माल की उचित कीमत नहीं मिलती है और दूसरी ओर जो उपभोक्ता हैं उनको भी आवश्यक वस्तुएँ कम कीमत पर नहीं मिलती हैं। इसका प्रमुख कारण यह है कि जो बिचौलिए हैं, मिडिलमेन हैं उनकी जेबों में प्राफिट का बहुत बड़ा भाग चला जाता है। हम देखते हैं कि गन्ने का भाव 300 रुपए टन है लेकिन शक्कर का भाव कहीं पर भी दस रुपए किलों से कम नहीं है। इसी तरह से किसान ने अपनी मूँगफली ठाई रुपए किलो में बेची लेकिन उसे तेल कहीं भी 12 रुपए किलो से कम नहीं मिलता है। इसी तरह से किसानों ने अपनी कपास 6 रुपए किलो में बेची लेकिन सूती धागा 25 रुपए किलो पर बेचा जा रहा है। इस तरह से उत्पादक और उपभोक्ता के बीच में जो इतना बड़ा गैप है इसका कोई लाभ न तो किसानों को मिलता है और न ही उपभोक्ताओं को मिलता है। इसलिए यह बड़ा महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न है और केन्द्रीय सरकार की ओर से इस पर सावधानी के साथ विचार किया जाना चाहिए।

अभी अभी हमारे स्पीकर साहब 4 नारीख को हिसार यूनिवर्सिटी गए थे जहाँ उन्होंने अपने भाषण में कहा :

“... कृषि उत्पादन की कीमतें निर्धारित करने का वर्तमान ढंग न यथार्थवादी है और न ही वैज्ञानिक। इससे उत्पादकों को लाभकारी कीमतें नहीं मिलती। बिचौलिए, जो हैं वह हमारे समाज को खोखला कर रहे हैं।”

यह कर्नाटक में जो दुर्घटना घटी है, मैं नहीं समझता किसी माननीय सदस्य को उससे दुःख नहीं हुआ होगा। यह देश कृषि प्रधान देश है और इस देश के किसानों को उनके उत्पादन की उचित कीमतें दिलाने का प्रयत्न

[श्री शिव कुमार सिंह ठाकुर]

किया जाना चाहिए। जहां तक तमाखू का प्रश्न है, इस वर्ष तमाखू की पैदावार बहुत अच्छी हुई है। आप जानते हैं हमारे देश में मुख्यतः तमाखू का उत्पादन कर्नाटक, महाराष्ट्र और गुजरात में होता है। तमाखू का 80 प्रतिशत उत्पादन गुजरात में होता है और 20 प्रतिशत कर्नाटक और महाराष्ट्र में होता है। महाराष्ट्र में कुछ लोगों ने, जिनमें विरोधी दल के लोग भी शामिल हैं एक आन्दोलन चलाया। कल बागड़ी जी यहां पर बहुत कुछ बोल रहे थे लेकिन आज वे उत्तर भी सुनने के लिए यहां पर मौजूद नहीं हैं। आज किसानों की मुश्किलों का नाजायज फायदा विरोधी दल उठा रहे हैं। नासिक में प्याज के सम्बन्ध में एक आन्दोलन चलाया गया, पोटेटो के लिए भी आन्दोलन चलाया गया। लेकिन यह बड़े किसानों की ओर से आन्दोलन था। मैं भी एक किसान हूं। और मैं भी मानता हूं कि किसानों को रेग्युलेटिव प्राइसेज मिलनी चाहिए। आज कुछ चीजें हैं जैसे शुगरकेन, पोटेटो, ओनियम, तमाखू और काटन, जिनकी तरफ सभी का ध्यान जा रहा है। इसमें पोलिटिकल मोटिव भी है। छोटे किसानों की ओर किसी का ध्यान नहीं जा रहा है। इसलिए मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि छोटे किसानों की जो समस्याएँ हैं उनको दूर करके उनको उचित लाभ दिलाने पर विचार किया जाना चाहिए।

मन्त्री महोदय ने कहा कि 10 रुपए किलो की रेग्युलेटिव प्राइस तम्बाकू उत्पादक किसानों को दिलाई जा रही है लेकिन यह बात सही नहीं है। 10 रुपए किलो की कीमत तो एक्सपोर्टर को मिलती है, निपाणी में किसानों को जो कीमत मिल रही है, तीन, चार या पांच रुपए किलो से ज्यादा नहीं है। जो एक्सपोर्टर्स हैं वही इसका लाभ उठा रहे हैं। आप जानते हैं कि आज विदेशों में तमाखू की माँग बहुत ज्यादा है। मैं मंत्री जी से पूछना

चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह सही नहीं है कि हमारे यहां की 250 लाख किलो तम्बाकू की माँग प्रतिवर्ष ब्रिटेन में नहीं है और रशिया में 250 लाख टन तम्बाकू की माँग है? क्या यह भी सही नहीं है कि भारतीय तम्बाकू खरीदने के लिए चाइना और जापान भी बाजार में आ रहा है? ये सारे बड़े देश हमारे यहां की तम्बाकू की माँग कर रहे हैं। हमारे माननीय मंत्री जी तम्बाकू में अन्तर करने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि वर्जिनिया तम्बाकू और बीड़ी तम्बाकू में। दोनों प्रकार की तम्बाकू की माँग वहां पर है। अखबारों में रिपोर्ट है कि हमारे तम्बाकू का एक्ज बोन का किसानों का घटता जा रहा है, चाहे आन्ध्रप्रदेश हो, चाहे कर्नाटक हो या महाराष्ट्र हो। भारत में 1977-78 में बोन का जो एरिया था, वह था 4 लाख 18 हजार हेक्टर जिससे पांच हजार 44 लाख किलो तम्बाकू उत्पादन होता था। 1978-79 में यह एरिया घटकर एक्ज 4 लाख हेक्टर हो गया और तम्बाकू उत्पादन हुआ 4 हजार 530 लाख किलो और 1979-80 में यह और घटकर 4 हजार 460 लाख किलो रह गया। मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह सही नहीं है कि तम्बाकू के बोन का रकबा घटता जा रहा है। आन्ध्र प्रदेश का किसान चूँकि उनको पैसा नहीं मिल रहा है वह तम्बाकू से हट कर काटन, चिल्ली और पैडो जैसी दूसरी कैश क्रॉप्स की ओर आकर्षित हो रहा है। इसके साथ-साथ मैं यह भी पूछना चाहता हूँ कि जैसा कि आपने अपने जवाब में लिखा है कि—“कृषि मंत्री को संबोधित एक और पत्र प्राप्त हुआ, जिसके अन्तर्गत सूचित किया गया कि कार्यवाही समिति ने 14 मार्च, 1981 से राज मार्ग संख्या चार पर ‘रास्ता रोको आन्दोलन’ शुरू करने का निर्णय किया है और यदि जरूरी हुआ तो उस महीने की ग्यारह तारीख से पहले बातचीत करने के लिए दिल्ली आयेंगे”। क्या यह सही नहीं है कि ग्यारह तारीख से पहले ही एक उग्रवादी रूप वहां के आन्दोलनकारियों ने लिया और शासन को बदनाम करने की कोशिश

की गई ? मैं आपके माध्यम से यह भी पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह सही नहीं है कि श्री शरद जोशी ने वहाँ कर्नाटक के मुख्यमंत्री जी की सार्वजनिक तौर पर तारीफ की है कि वह सहानुभूतिपूर्वक किसानों की समस्याओं पर विचार कर रहे हैं । मैं चाहता हूँ कि जो मैंने प्रश्न पूछे हैं माननीय मंत्री जी से वे कृपा कर उन सब का उत्तर देने की कृपा करें ।

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:

In my opening sentence I have expressed my sympathies with the victims of this unfortunate incident. But the hon. Member has widened the scope of this Calling Attention; he has brought in sugar, potato and other things. The basic question, which he has put, regarding tobacco I have already answered. There is nothing more that I could add.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY (Nizamabad): It is very unfortunate that this Conference was held at a very sensitive area, bordering Karnataka and Maharashtra. What is the political significance of choosing such a sensitive area? I would request the Government to consider sympathetically the demands of the tobacco growers. But the Government should put down with all the power the stone throwing and *Rastha Rokho* movement. Is it a fact that only 56 merchants have been purchasing all the tobacco from the growers and that they have not paid the amount? Since it is a joint responsibility of the Government, I would like to know from the Home Minister

whether he is going to use the National Security Act in this case or not. After all, for what purpose has this Act been passed? These people loot the kisans and become multi millionaires and *crore-paths*. If he is not going to use this Act or some other laws, we have to start an agitation against our own Home Minister from the Congress Party.

Secondly I want to know from the Minister how much tobacco is being

consumed in beedi, for chewing, for hooka, for snuff and how much he expects to export. Moreover, about unremunerative prices, the traders are manipulating the prices and making them unremunerative. So, I would like to know whether the Government is going to advise the State Government to form the cooperative societies. Already I am informed that the Chief Minister has sent three top officers of the Government to advise the people to start cooperative movement in this field also.

As you know, Maharashtra and Karnataka are the home of cooperative movement. They have done wonders in so many other fields. So, why should they not start the cooperative movement in respect of tobacco also?

Prof. Dandavate has said so many things, but he has not condemned these violent activities. As you know, no kisan indulges in any violent activity. It is the anti-social elements that enter into the Kisan conference and so, these people should see that the anti-social elements are kept out. Why have not they done it? Recently we had a mammoth gathering of 25 lakhs of kisans. We never allowed any anti-social elements in it. (*Interruptions*) No other political party can do it except Mr. Vajpayee's party. Whether we agree with him or not, they are disciplined and they are no anti-social elements. (*Interruptions*) That is a fact. No anti-social element can enter this. Similarly, it cannot enter in our Congress organisation also.

Sir, I want to know from the Minister what concrete steps he is going to suggest for the tobacco growers so that we may be satisfied. After all, we are the biggest party and we have got the biggest following of the kisans with us and we have been very sympathetic to them. Moreover, these kisans of Karnataka and Maharashtra have built the economies of those States—and Sir, your State also—so strongly that no agitation can destroy

[Shri M. Ram Gopal Reddy]

the base of economy in those two States.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:

Sir, regarding what the hon. Member has said, whatever is the political angle of this, I am not concerned with because I am concerned only with the economic part of it and that I have been answering. Whether *Rasta Roko* is the responsibility of those people or not, it is for somebody else to look into. I quite agree with the hon. Member that the cooperative movement is the best movement which can help the growers and the cultivators and I am sure the State Governments concerned will look into this and we would also certainly like to draw their attention to this fact.

As regards *kisans*, I also agree that they are not violent and I feel so because I am also doing a little bit of 'kisan'. So, I feel that I am also a *kisan* and I have never been violent in my life and so, I quite agree that they are not violent. But who exploits their sentiments, I do not know.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:

You are violently peaceful!

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:

Sir, the hon Member wanted to know the break-up of the quantity of snuff, tobacco, hooka tobacco and bidi tobacco. I have got the total figure of bidi tobacco, which is about 160000 tonnes per annum, that has been produced recently. Unfortunately I am unable to give even the average because I neither smoke, nor take the snuff nor chew pan. Otherwise, I would have given something on the basis of my own averages and that might have given a rough idea about it.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY:

Sir, for what purpose we have passed the National Security Act when we cannot use it?

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN:

Sir, this is the subject about which I am really not in a position to answer.

13.20 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. WITHDRAWAL OF MONEY FROM CONTINGENCY FUND OF INDIA FOR SETTING UP ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS COMMISSION

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA):

Sir, as the Hon. Member are aware, the Government of India have set up on 5th March, 1981, an Economic Administration Reforms Commission under the Chairmanship of Shri L. K. Jha. The Commission would provide an institutional arrangement for advising Government on certain important areas of economic administration and on matters involving interaction between different sectors of government activity in this field. Initially, the Commission will review tax administration, its rationalisation and improvement, the use of non-tax devices for raising the level of savings; establishment of new economic order; and rent control laws prevailing in the country. It would also deal with such matters regarding the economic administration and its reforms as may be referred to it by Government from time to time.

2. The Commission will be within the administrative purview of the Cabinet Secretariat. The Demand for Grants of this Ministry for the year 1981-82 are already before the House for consideration. The expenditure on this 'New Service' could not be foreseen and has not been incorporated in the Budget provisions for the year 1981-82. The Commission is required to begin its work early and submit its reports. Delay in providing the fund would not be in public interest. Funds for meeting the expenditure on setting up of the Commission and for meeting the day to day expenditure, viz. salary and allowances, office expenses and Travel expenses, etc. have to be provided. It is accordingly proposed to