

(ii) REPORTED DECISION TO BAN EXPORT OF PROCESSED FROG LEGS

SHRI K. T. KOSALRAM (Tiruchendur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I place before the House one important point. When the Parliament is in Session the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Shri Prabhu Das Patwari told the Vegetarian Congress at Madras that the Government of India was contemplating a ban on the export of frog legs. Such a policy decision should not have been so deviously presented when both the Houses were sitting. I want to ask whether a policy of this kind can be pronounced by Governors on behalf of the Government of India?

Sir, I wanted to place this matter before this House and also wanted to draw the attention of our beloved Prime Minister. It is thought that the Hindus as a class are vegetarians. But in the four southern States, namely, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, 97 per cent of the Hindus are non-vegetarians; this percentage may not be in the case of Gujarat State as felt by the Prime Minister.

In spite of many Five-Year Plans, it is a matter of regret that we have not been able to provide full employment; year after year the problem of unemployment is becoming more and more difficult. When we are in such a stage of development, nothing should be done to aggravate this problem of unemployment. Viewed in this light, the decision of the Government to ban export of frog legs is an unwise one. If the Government takes any such decision, it would generate more unemployment on a large scale, loss of foreign exchange earnings of Rs. 15 crores and ill-feeling between Harijans and vegetarian Hindus. Nearly thirty lakhs of labourers, mostly Harijans and other weaker sections would lose employment. They make a living by catching frogs and handing them over to factories who process them into frog legs for export and fish-meal which is a necessary ingredient of protein for chicken feed. This unwise decision will deprive these thirty lakhs of people of their living and I assert that nobody in this country, including the Government have a right to deprive anyone of a living. Whatever might have been the reason for this decision, let it be based on religion that it wounds the feelings of vegetarian Hindus as seems to have been explained by the Prime Minister to a deputation of these people or that it is against Hinduism and vegetarianism, it is not a right decision. If catching frogs offends the feelings of vegetarian Hindus section of the people, then catching fish, slaughtering of goats, sheep and chickens also would offend the so-called feelings. Then, why does the Government promote poultry farming,

expend a lot of money on purchase of fishing trawlers and even assist industrialists in diversifying in the direction of establishing new ventures for processing of buffalo beef, though for export. After processing the legs, the remnants are all converted into fish-meal which contains 65% protein which is used as chicken-feed whereas the fish itself contains only 40% protein which is also an exportable commodity earning foreign exchange. By this decision, the poultry farms will also be starved of a necessary raw material.

Frogs also live in water along with fish and they are considered as one of the varieties of fish. Another variety of fish called prawns is exported to foreign countries earning foreign exchange worth many crores. If killing the frogs is a cruel act, the same reason should apply to the killing of fish and prawns.

I would like to know from the Government if they are going to ban the catching of the fish because this is also cruel? I would appeal to the Prime Minister, do not touch this and ban the export of frog legs, because this is helping the country to earn a lot of foreign exchange. It is also providing employment to three million people. The poor Harijans and agricultural labour are earning their livelihood by this; they catch one frog and sell it 5 to 7 Rs. each. I once again appeal to the government. This policy I cannot understand. This is an all-India policy. I appeal to the Hon. Minister to think over it and not to ban the export of these things.

cc. cc. hrs.

(iii) REPORTED BEHAVIOUR OF INDIAN AMBASSADOR IN U.S.A.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN (Madras-South): Under rule 377 I rise to bring to the notice of this House and the Prime Minister and the Minister for External Affairs an incident which is inconsistent with the dignity and self-respect of this country involving our Ambassador. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the United States.

The Hindu dated 21st December carries a report from Washington that a very widely circulated newspaper, The New York Daily News, has published a photograph showing our Ambassador Extraordinary may I say, and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India, Mr. Palkhiwala kneeling on the floor of a restaurant and holding the foot of Miss

[Shri R. Venkataraman]

Lillian Carter, the mother of the President of the United States. I do not know if our Ambassador was engaged in a demonstration of the habit of touching the feet of elders to the American public. I am not also sure whether it is a gesture of new and genuine non-aligned policy assumed by the government.

The report further goes on to say :

"It appears that at a lunch attended by our envoy, Miss Lillian had expressed a desire to own a pair of chappals to match the sarree she had. The Ambassador quickly jumped out of his seat to take measurements of Miss Lillian's foot oblivious of the fact that there are photographers present around."

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN (Arkonam): Where is the hon. Minister for External Affairs?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: We know, Sir, that Mr. Palkhiwala is a very eminent lawyer but we did not know that he had other concealed virtues including chappal-fitting.

It is a pity that the Ambassador Extra-ordinary should have thought fit to display such accomplishment in the public lowering the dignity and respect of our country and our people.

The President of the Indians Association in the United States has expressed deep concern over the incident which tends to be little the image of our country. It is also reported that one of the newspapers had captioned this picture as a bootstrap diplomacy and this is a compliment to the government that what they are following is a bootstrap diplomacy.

The entire episode is shameful and the least the government should do in this matter is to recall not the Ambassador Extra-ordinary but the extra-ordinary Ambassador and if they so desire, put him in charge of export promotion of chappals to the United States of America.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Will you please ask the Minister of External Affairs who is not here to let us know his reactions?

(iv) STRIKE BY THE EMPLOYEES OF GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

SHRI PURNA SINHA (Tezpur): Sir, with effect from the 16th December, 1977, more than one lakh employees of the Govt. of Assam are on continuous strike demanding implementation of their demands including payment of additional

D.A. of Rs. 30 per month which was announced earlier by the State Chief Minister, making it payable from 1-7-77. He has not been able to pay because he pleads that he is in debt of Rs. 553 crores. He has become incapable of administering the State. Therefore the workers have again gone on strike.

Instead of making settlement with the workers the Government has threatened the employees with termination of services of the temporary ones and ordering break in services to the permanent ones. These threats are being issued over the Gauhati Station of AIR. At the same time, armed police battalions are being deployed to terrorise the striking employees and their families in their residences. In sympathy with this strike other government undertakings have also started going on strike. Industries undertakings and other public utility services are going to strike from December 28, next. It is likely that the strike will extend to other branches of the administration and public utility services including the State Electricity Board. The whole governmental machinery has collapsed in the meanwhile. Supply, procurement and distribution system has also been completely paralysed. So, under Rule 377, I draw the attention of the Government. The Central Government should immediately take steps to dismiss this Government which is incapable of administering the State. The Centre should take over the State administration of Assam and create a situation to satisfy the workers. Only Rs. 6 crores would be needed in order to satisfy their demands. That should be paid. The strike will be called off. At the same time peace will be established in the State. The State is running into difficulties. So, the Centre should step in immediately and save the State from ruin.

(v) CLOSURE OF DELHI EDITION OF NATIONAL HERALD AND WEATHER CONTROL AND EXPERIMENT ON WEATHER WARFARE

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): Sir, I have mentioned about the closure of the *National Herald*.

Today is the last day for this session and I am told that we are not meeting before the 19th of February next year.

Is this paper to be allowed to close down because some people want to shield and hide their economic malpractices and corruption? Every month, I am told, Mrs. Gandhi used to give Rs. 1 1/2 lakhs. I have told this to the Minister of State for Finance, Mr. Agarwal, to enquire into the matter through Revenue Intelligence and other sources. In the meantime, some 400 persons are going to be thrown out of employment. Their jobs have to be