

PROF. P. G. MAVALANKAR (Gandhinagar): Sir, I am on a point of order. Yesterday I invited the attention of the Chair by pointing out that the Ministry of Education reports were for the year as early as 1970-71. They came after 8 years. If you go on politely giving directives but no action is taken, what will happen?

MR. SPEAKER: Now, all that I can do is, apart from bringing it to the notice of the Government, to place it before the Committee on....

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: There is no Committee on the misconduct of Government. Which Committee, Sir, you will place it before?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN (Arkonam): The delay is due to the fact that it has to be translated into Hindi.

SHRI T. A. PAI (Udipi): It is due to inefficiency.

MR. SPEAKER: Even then there should not be much difficulty.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: This gentleman from the West Coast of India, this Mangalore gentleman, Mr. Pai, has said 'inefficiency'. It is not 'inefficiency'. The Birla Brothers maintain contact men here inside the Secretariat and the political cell to see that these papers do not come to light. It is not inefficiency, Mr. Pai. You know better than I do. It is all silver tonic; that is what works, and that is how the 1974 document is coming before the House 4 years afterwards.

REVIEW & ANNUAL REPORT OF FERTILIZERS AND CHEMICALS TRAVANCORE LTD. FOR 1970-77

पेट्रोलियम तथा रसायन और उर्बरक मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री जयेश्वर मिश्र) : मैं कम्पनी अधिनियम, 1956 की धारा 619क की उपधारा (1) के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित पत्रों (हिन्दी तथा अंग्रेजी संस्करण) की एक-एक प्रति सभा पटल पर रखता हूँ :

(1) फटिलाइजर्स एण्ड कैमिकल्स ट्रावन्कोर लिमिटेड के वर्ष

1976-77 के कार्यकरण की सरकार द्वारा सवीक्षा।

(2) फटिलाइजर्स एण्ड कैमिकल्स ट्रावन्कोर लिमिटेड का वर्ष 1976-77 का वार्षिक प्रतिवेदन, सेवापरीक्षित लेखे तथा उन पर नियंत्रक-महासेवा परीक्षक की टिप्पणियाँ।

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-1776/78].

NOTIFICATION UNDER CUSTOMS ACT, 1962

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ZULFIQUARULLAH): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of Notification No. G.S.R. 161(E) (Hindi and English versions) published in Gazette of India dated the 3rd March, 1978, under section 159 of the Customs Act, 1962 along with an explanatory memorandum. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-1777/78].

12.10 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED STEEP FALL IN PRICES OF JAGGERY

SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU (Chittoor): I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The reported steep fall in the prices of jaggery discontentment amongst the farmers in certain States on account of the delay in purchase of sugar cane and non-payment of minimum statutory price of Rs. 12.50 per quintal by the sugar mill owners and the steps taken by Government to protect the interests of farmers."

It is not the minimum statutory price of Rs. 12.50; it is the agreed price of Rs. 13.50.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): Sir, Government are fully conscious of the availability, off-take and price situation of all the sweetening agents in the country. Government have already taken a number of remedial measures and the House will recall my making a statement in this regard on February 24, 1978.

There has been a bumper production of sugarcane during the current year. It is estimated to be of the order of 165 million tonnes, registering an increase of 11 million tonnes. While the average all India increase has been of the order of about 7 per cent, in some States the increase in cane production has been even more pronounced. In Uttar Pradesh the increased availability is estimated to be more than 10 per cent over the level of the last year and in Karnataka around 15 per cent. In districts where a large area is under cane—as much as one third or more of the cultivated area—the problem is acute.

As a result of larger availability of cane and hence the availability of all the sweetening agents, liberal releases of sugar for domestic consumption, Government's policy to enlarge the coverage of the public distribution system and to ensure similarity of treatment between rural and urban areas, the prices of all the sweetening agents have declined steeply in recent months. Gur prices have come down by about Rs. 40 per quintal in the last 2½ months. Sir, I may reiterate that while the fall in prices is no doubt welcome to the extent it provides relief to the consumer, Government are determined to take all steps to avert prices falling to unremunerative levels which would affect the interests of 25 million sugarcane growers.

As nearly 60 per cent of the sugarcane grown in the country goes for gur and khandsari, a series of measures have been taken by the Government. Export of gur has been per-

mitted without any quantity or price. To induce larger off-take and stocking of gur and khandsari by trade channels, the minimum margins for bank advances against these commodities have been substantially brought down. Besides the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation Limited, the Food Corporation of India has also been asked to enter the market and purchase gur in a big way by offering a premium over the wholesale prices prevailing in the concerned market the previous day. It is hoped that all these would provide the much needed relief to the cane grower. Indications are already available that gur prices are tending to look up. In a number of centres in U.P. such as Hapur, Bareilly, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar etc. wholesale prices of gur have already gone up by Rs. 5-6 per quintal. Here, with your permission, I am modifying the statement a little. According to the latest information received this morning, prices have gone up by Rs. 5/- to Rs. 14/- per quintal. A similar trend is noticeable in Anakapalli, Nizamabad and Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, Kohlapur in Maharashtra and in Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.

The sugar industry is expected to produce at least 52 lakh tonnes of sugar during the current year recording an increased production of 4 lakh tonnes. Thus, out of the extra 11 million tonnes of cane, the sugar industry would provide an off-take of 4-5 million tonnes of cane. We are exploring the scope to further maximize the off-take of cane by the industry by giving suitable incentives for crushing beyond April 30, 1978 when recovery would register a steep decline and therefore the cost of production will go up. Besides, several measures such as increase in the weighted average ex-factory price for levy sugar to Rs. 187.50 per quintal, export of 6.5 lakh tonnes of sugar, increased credit limits to take care of the additional stocks etc. have been decided upon. I wish to dispel a misunderstanding entertained in some quarters that these

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[Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh]

measures constitute a "gift" to the industry. In fact all these are to enable the industry to function in a viable manner and to ensure that the cane growers continue to get the same price that they have been getting.

The Hon'ble Member has referred to the discontentment of the farmers in certain States and non-payment of minimum statutory price of Rs. 12.50 per quintal of cane. The statutory minimum cane price is Rs. 8.50 per quintal linked to a recovery of 8.5 per cent. No factory can pay a price less than the statutory minimum cane price. In fact almost all the sugar factories are paying a price well above the statutory minimum cane price and, in many cases, even higher than what the sharing formula relating to 50 : 50 sharing of the excess realization in free sale between the cane grower and the management, would entail. Although the sugar season started late, sugar production as at the end of February has been more than that of the corresponding period production in the last year which would mean that more sugarcane has already been absorbed by the industry during the current year. As I said earlier, Government are keen to ensure maximum outlet for cane through sugar industry.

SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU: Jaggery producers in Andhra Pradesh are not in a position to crush the sugarcane, as the price is not sufficient even to meet the crushing charges. The existing standing crop is double the crop in the previous year at this time. The jaggery producers are becoming bankrupt. They cannot change the crops now.

The reply of the Minister is in general terms. He has not mentioned how much jaggery is going to be bought by the FCI and other agencies. In Andhra Pradesh itself, it is hoped that they will take at least one lakh tonnes of jaggery, in addition to the purchases made through trade channels.

The position regarding cane is worse. The agriculturists are agitating that the statutory minimum price should be raised to Rs. 12.50 per quintal, but the Government is not conceding that. The cane growers, especially from the South are agitating for the implementation of the Marathe Committee report so that they can get justice, but it is not done. In that report it is stated that it is decided to fix the levy price at Rs. 187. I want to know from the Minister whether it has come to the south.

The factory owners agreed to pay Rs. 13.50 per quintal in UP, but they are not giving it. They are closing down their factories. So, the cane growers are forced to sell the cane at low prices, even at Rs. 5 to 7. The Minister said that they are paying the statutory minimum price. It is not so. The position is not better in Maharashtra. The private factories in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are not paying the agreed price, but far less than what the co-operative factories are giving.

The factory owners are not paying even the value of the cane purchased by them at those low prices. They have to pay crores of rupees to the agriculturists. It is the case with the factory owners in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and other areas. The Government is not taking any action to see that the price of the cane is paid to the growers in time and to see that the agreed price is paid.

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot read out the entire statement.

SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU: In Andhra area the farmers say that there is no other go except to burn cane worth one crores of rupees.

In UP the sugarcane growers protested against the plight meted out to them by the factory owners, when 35 of them were arrested. Again, the cane growers all over UP want to demonstrate peacefully and non-violently on 17th March at Lucknow to

protest against the exploitative action of the factory owners and to bring to the notice of the Government their pitiable position. Instead of protecting the cane growers, the U.P. Government imposed a ban on the demonstration. It is certainly an anti-democratic and anti-peasant action.

So, may I know whether the Government is going to purchase jaggery and if so, how much? Secondly, are they going to ask the U.P. Ministry to lift the ban so that the cane growers are allowed to demonstrate peacefully?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: I have already said....

SHRI CHANDAN SINGH (Kairana) rose—

MR. SPEAKER: This is a call attention. The rules permit only the person who has tabled the Call Attention to ask a question (*Interruptions*) I am not permitting anybody else. Under the rules it is not permissible Don't record.

SHRI CHANDAN SINGH: **

MR. SPEAKER: Please answer only Mr. Naidu's question.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: The question has been asked what quantity of jaggery will be purchased. I have already said that it will be purchased in large quantities. The aim is to raise the price of gur. It is rising quite rapidly. As I have already stated, it has gone up by Rs. 5 to Rs. 14 per quintal. After a certain level of price is reached, the FCI will withdraw from the market. The whole operation is intended to bring the prices up, and after the price has reached a certain level, we will not remain in the market. So, no quantity can be fixed for it. In fact, if a quantity is fixed, it will defeat the very purpose for which the purchases are being made. But I can assure the House that the purchases will go on till the prices of jaggery go up to a certain level

Regarding the other question about demonstration etc. scheduled to be held in Lucknow, I can only say that it is a State subject and that this Ministry has nothing to do with it. It is a matter which can be raised in the U.P. Assembly.

SHRI F. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU: The cane growers in U.P. are getting less than Rs. 7 and Rs. 8 per quintal. The Minister stated that they are getting the agreed price. I say they are not getting.

MR. SPEAKER: He is disputing your statement.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: Let me make myself clear. As far as the 'organised sector is concerned, I mean the vacuum pan factories, they are all paying the agreed price. When I say all, I mean all. There is not a single party which is not paying it.

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Akola): The other day I raised the question of the Sarasvati Mills which have closed. How much were they paying?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: I have made myself very clear that as far as the organised sector or the vacuum pan factories are concerned, they are all paying the agreed price. It is only in respect of khandsari that there is a report of some underpayment and that is being taken care of.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I have myself raised this question....

MR. SPEAKER: There cannot be a debate.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: There is no debate.

MR. SPEAKER: If he is misleading the House, there are other remedies

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA (Tumkur): I rise on a fundamental point of order. I agree that in a call attention, only

[Shri K Lakkappa]

the member whose name is there can ask the question. But will you kindly sit in judgment over a wrong information given by the Minister to the House?

MR SPEAKER There are other procedures for that.

SHRI K LAKKAPPA What is the procedure?

MR SPEAKER You see the rules.

SHRI K LAKKAPPA That is why, I say 'you pull up the Minister'.

12 25 hrs

STATEMENT RE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF INDIA ACT 1976

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE (DR FRATAP CHANDRA CHUN DER) Sir during 1976 both Houses of Parliament passed the National Library of India Act 1976 which envisaged an autonomous Board for the National Library Calcutta which at present is a subordinate office under the Department of Culture. This Act was to come into force from the date it was notified in the Gazette. The Govt of India has not so far brought the Act into force and the National Library continues to be a subordinate office of the Department of Culture.

A Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof V S Jha was set up by the Government of India in May 1968 to review the working of the National Library Calcutta and to suggest measures for its efficient functioning and further development. The Committee *inter alia* recommended that the then Advisory Council should be replaced by a Governing Council exercising real authority. In other words the Governing Council should be vested with complete autonomy—delegated autonomy and not statutory. The Government agreed in principle to give the largest measure of autonomy to the Library as envisaged in the Jha Committee report. On examination in consultation with the Ministry of Law and Justice it was found that the type of autonomy envisaged by the Jha Committee could

not be given by Resolution of the Govt. Such a resolution would not accord juridical personality to the National Library, Calcutta. The Department of Culture was advised that autonomous status could be given to the National Library Calcutta, in one of the three following ways

- (i) by registering it as a society under the West Bengal Societies Act,
- (ii) by registering it as a company under the Companies Act,
- (iii) by an act of Parliament

After considering the various aspects of these alternatives, the Government decided upon enacting a legislative measure and making the National Library a statutory autonomous body. Accordingly, the National Library Bill was moved in the Lok Sabha on 18-12-72.

On a motion by the then Education Minister the Bill was referred to the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament. The Committee invited memoranda on the Bill from various individuals/organisations/associations etc. It also held its sittings in Calcutta, New Delhi and Bombay and received oral evidence. More than half of the individuals/representatives of the associations/cultural organisations who submitted memoranda on the Bill or appeared for oral evidence belonged to West Bengal. They were generally opposed to the very idea of autonomous status for the National Library as envisaged in the Bill. The Joint Committee of Parliament took into consideration the various objections raised by the individuals, organisations etc and modified the draft Bill to meet these objections. The Committee presented the revised Bill along with its report on 26th July 1974.

The following members of the Joint Committee recorded minutes of dissent

- (1) Shri Saroj Mukherjee
- (2) Shri H N Mukherjee
Shri Sanat Kumar Raha
- (3) Shri Samar Guha
Shri Virendra Agarwala
Shyamal Gupta