

million Kgs. of tea. This is causing anxiety.

17.32 hrs.

RE NATION WIDE BANDH ON 29TH
NOVEMBER, 1991

[English]

SHRI A . CHARLES (Trivandrum): I would like to draw the attention of the Leader of the House about a very serious matter. The Leader of the House is here.

Just now I have contacted some newspapers about the Bandh tomorrow. Tomorrow, the Offices will be closed. There will be a nation wide Bandh. The people have already left their offices. We are concerned about the whole situation. I would like to know from the Leader of the House, whether the government has received any notice regarding this and if so, what is the reaction of the Government? Tomorrow, we are having the sitting. We are not sure how we are going to come here. What about our security? What is going to happen to this country? What about our transport?

The time has now come when the Government should react. What about the Officers and staff who are working all over the country?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you concerned about the security?

SHRI A. CHARLES: I am not only concerned with the security but also other things. They have informed that the nation wide bandh would paralyse the life in the country. This is very important matter.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: It will be a peaceful Bandh. There will be a peaceful strike throughout India.

SHRI A. CHARLES: Have you received any notice that the whole nation will be observing Bandh tomorrow? There will be a strike all over the country. We are concerned about the whole situation. Have you received

any notice and if so what action has been taken by the Government?

Whether there are any negotiations going on with the trade unions; and whether the trade unions are responding in a responsive manner. The Leader of the House is here. With Your permission, I would like to seek clarification from him on these points.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to know whether it has come to the notice of the Government or not whether there would be a strike tomorrow?

SHRI A. CHARLES: If it has come to the notice of the Government, whether in the evening are they issuing any orders in this respect? (Interruptions)

SHRI P.C.CHACKO: Without any justification, the strike is going to take place.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: It is a politically motivated strike.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : It will be a peaceful strike throughout India tomorrow. There is no question of security.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Has it come to the notice of the House whether there would be a strike tomorrow? If the Leader of the House thinks it fit, he may kindly give a reply.

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): Respected Sir, It is in the notice of the Government that some trade unions want to go on a strike tomorrow. I do not dispute the right of any trade union to go on a strike; they are entitled to do so. What I would like to state very categorically is that the new Industrial Policy that was introduced, discussed in this House approved in this House, of course, with some dissenting voices, during the discussion, the Prime Minister very categorically stated in the last session of Parliament that the Government will fully protect the interest of the labour class, because this Government can never be oblivious to the basic interest of the

working people in this country.

Secondly, the fact that certain steps have been suggested should be seen in their correct perspective. A Tripartite Committee has been set up specifically for this purpose so that any misapprehension or apprehension on this account should be discussed across the table and solution found. My esteemed colleague, Mr. P.A. Sangma is chairing that Committee. A meeting was held on the 17th of this month. The next meeting is scheduled for 20th December. So far as the issues are concerned, I do not want to go into them just now because the fact is that this House and the Rajya Sabha are scheduled to discuss the entire gamut of this issue next week in the House. In these circumstances, all I would like to say, I would like to appeal to every one who is contemplating to go on a strike, the issues they want to highlight which they seem to underline are already the issues on which the Prime Minister has come out categorically with an assurance in favour of the working class. Still, if there is something which needs to be discussed, forums are there which can be discussed. This House is going to discuss that. It would not be in the fitness of things to go on a strike at this juncture. I would like to make an appeal to all those trade unions who have decided their right to decide I do not question but I have to have the right to make an appeal to them that perhaps this strike would not serve any purpose, the purpose which they want to serve can be served in another way for which this Government's doors are always open.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Who are the parties in the Tripartite Committee?

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: All these trade unions the Government, the trade unions and the industry.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): A decision was taken long back, two months ago, in a convention where all national trade unions including INTUC were present in that

convention where a decision was taken to go on a token strike on the 29th November, 1991.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please come to the point. The Leader of the House categorically stated that he does not deny the right of the trade unions to go on a strike. But he has also got a right to make an appeal to the trade unions which he has done.

[Translation]

What is your point?

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: On the one hand, the Government is making appeals and on the other hand they are taking steps to close down the units. Already a number of units have been closed down in West Bengal. Haldia Fertilizers has been closed down. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. As the leader of the House has pointed out, the Prime Minister has already agreed to have a discussion where the whole gamut of the New Industrial Policy will be discussed and some of the question of closing down of units, I am sure, will from part of that discussion. This was the only point I raised by Shri Charles and the Leader of the House has answered it very adequately.

I would now like Shri Panigrahi to continue his speech.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: The Leader of the House must say whether the Government will withdraw its policy or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not the place for the Leader to make a commitment. Now this matter is closed and nothing will be recorded.

(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, this is not

the time to get an assurance from the Leader of the House on that issue. Let us proceed according to rules. How do you expect him at this time to give an assurance that the policy will not be implemented? I am sorry.

Shri Charles, Please sit down.

Shri Panigrahi, will you please continue your speech? You better wind up now.

17.42 hrs.

TEA COMPANIES (ACQUISITION AND
TRANSFER OF SICK TEA UNITS)
AMENDMENT BILL (Contd.)

[English]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: I will only take two minutes more. I was stating that in India, which is the number one country in respect of tea production how has the sort of situation been created.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already dealt with it adequately.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: Our domestic production is growing steadily, at the rate of more than 4.8 per cent per year, rate of Growth of production is as low as 3.1 per cent. About 600 million cups of tea are being consumed in India daily whereas the position in China is different.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Has the Prime Minister come back, Sir? Somebody is sitting in the seat of the Prime Minister. I was just thinking whether the Prime Minister has come back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava, I am told that nobody is allowed to sit in the Prime Minister's seat. In fact, I am not keen on this rule but I am told that nobody is allowed to sit there.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: It is the convention of the House that nobody else

should sit in the Prime Minister's seat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am sure that when you are in a position to occupy that seat, you can sit there.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: In China where the production of tea is about 80 per cent compared to our production figure it is improving steadily its share of global tea exports.

It has increased from 12.5 per cent in 1980 to 14.27 per cent in 1985 and further to 16.77 per cent in 1990. India's export position has dropped from 26 per cent in 1980 to 22 percent in 1985 and further to 18 percent in 1990. And as I understand, it is now as low as 14 percent.

It is therefore required to raise both our production and productivity. How can we do that? We have to increase the area of the plantation and at the same time we have to go in for more advanced technology and management methods.

Out of the total number of 13,570 tea estates in our country, there are about 145 weak and sick units and only about four or very little number we have taken over.

In this connection I would like to mention that West Bengal is a prominent tea growing State. When the hon. Members from West Bengal took part in the discussion, one thing struck my mind as to why they do not take it up with their State Government so that they can also develop some tea estate themselves. What is the harm? (Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): West Bengal has Tea Development Corporation.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: I have said about plantation itself, ten estate itself.. (Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: You hand over these gardens to the West Bengal Tea