

(H. A. M. Dis.)

आगमन से चित्तीड़ से कोटा तक रेलवे लाइन का सर्वेक्षण इस वर्ष हो जायेगा और अगले वर्ष उसके निर्माण का कार्य आरम्भ हो जायेगा।

इन शब्दों के साथ में रेलवे बजट का स्वागत करता हूँ।

श्री न० नि० पटेल (वलसार) : सभापति महोदय, इसके पहले कि मैं कुछ कहूँ, मैं डा० राम सुभग सिंह का, जो रेलवे मंत्रालय में वापस आ गये, अभिनन्दन करता हूँ। मुझे बड़ी उम्मीद है कि थोड़े समय पहले, जब वह रेल मंत्री थे, जो जो बातें उनके सामने हमने रखी थीं, उनकी तरफ ध्यान देकर वह हमारी तकलीफों को दूर करेंगे।

सबसे पहले मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि पिछले साल 6 अगस्त को गुजरात में जो बाढ़ आई, उसकी वजह से खास कर वलसार और भड़ौच के बीच में करीब-करीब एक महीने तक वह रेलवे लाइन बन्द रही और लोगों को बड़ा नुकसान हुआ। रेलवे को भी कम से कम 3 करोड़ रुपयों का नुकसान हुआ। सूरत में तापी नदी है, तापी और वापी के जो क्षेत्र हैं उनमें दस नदियाँ हैं इन नदियों में बारह महीने पानी रहता है, यह दस नदियाँ हैं तापी, मिन्डोला, पूर्णा, अम्बिका कावेरी, खरेरा, औरंगा, पार, कोलका और दमनगंगा। जब बाढ़ आई, उस समय मैं वही पर था। वहाँ का जो सीन मैंने देखा उसकी पोजीशन यह थी सब तरफ पानी ही पानी भरा था। यह सब नदियाँ पूर्व से पश्चिम की ओर बहती हैं, और जो रेलवे लाइन का ट्रैक है वह उत्तर से दक्षिण की तरफ है। जब यह बाढ़ आई तब नदियाँ इतनी बढ़ गईं कि उनका पानी निकल नहीं पाया। ऐसा लगता था एक बड़ा भारी समुद्र है और उसके बीच रेलवे ट्रैक जो है वह बाँध बना दिया गया है। वहाँ पर पानी के न निकलने की वजह से रेलों की पटरियों की जो मिट्टी थी वह सब बह गई और सब जगह फैल

गई। जो ब्रिजेज थे वह भी हिल गये। उस वक्त श्री पुनाचा से हमने कहा था कि यह जो नदियाँ हैं उनके जो स्पॅन हैं, पानी निकालने की जगहें हैं उनके ब्रिजेज और कल्वर्ट्स को बड़ा कीजिये, नहीं तो पता नहीं है कि कब बाढ़ आ जावे। अगर ऐसा नहीं किया गया तो इस समय मानसून में जो बाढ़ आई है, वह हमेशा के लिये रहने वाली है। लेकिन छः महीने हो गये, और हम देखते हैं कि अभी तक कुछ किया नहीं गया है। जिस तरह से वहाँ गाड़ियाँ चलती थीं, उसी तरह से चल रही हैं। वह गाड़ियाँ भी कैसे चलती हैं? बम्बई से जो गाड़ी चलती थीं बाढ़ आने से पहले, उनमें से हर एक का समय का एक घंटा जल्दी कर दिया गया, लेकिन दिल्ली से बम्बई पहुँचने वाली जो गाड़ियाँ है वह अभी भी एक घंटा देर से पहुँचती हैं क्योंकि वहाँ पर हमें जो काम करना चाहिए था वह हम कर नहीं पाते हैं।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Hon. Member continue tomorrow. We shall, now take up Half-an-hour discussion.

17.30 hrs.

HALF AN HOUR DISCUSSION EXPORT OF PEPPER

SHRI E. K. NAYANAR (Palghat) : While replying to unstarred question No. 209 on 18 February 1969 the Hon. Minister said that the Export Promotion Council in Ernakulam would do everything to export pepper and that the Council's Foreign Officer at Brussels will do a good deal to do so. This is not the real problem. Either the Minister is ignorant about pepper export or the officers are hiding the facts... (Interruptions.) Pepper is a commercial crop and earns much needed foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 12 crores a year. The total annual production of pepper in India is 23,000 tonnes a year. This means that Kerala produces a lion's share of pepper in the whole country, about 93 per cent, and it earns Rs. 11 crores a year as foreign exchange. Such an industry which earns valuable foreign exchange is facing a serious crisis. If the Central Government did not take

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remedial measures, prospects of this industry will be very dim. Pepper was a pride product of Kerala. In ancient days Kerala was exporting pepper, generally known as black gold to Rome, Athens, etc. In Kerala pepper is cultivated in 2,46,640 acres spread all over the State. During the Third Plan the Central Government formulated some measures for the development of this industry. However, these measures were not implemented at all and they remained in paper only. Sometime back a conference on spices was held in Goa and some delegates from Kerala put forward some suggestions on behalf of the cultivators for the development of this industry but to no avail. Firstly, the demand to fix a minimum price for pepper has not been conceded so far. The monopoly traders, especially in Bombay take a major share of the profit while the actual cultivator gets very low prices. At present pepper export trade is handled by big monopoly traders in Bombay. In Kerala itself pepper export is in the hands of Pearsesly, Volkart Brothers, William Gudekar Company, etc. These are the British capitalist firms. To help the cultivators overcome these hardships, State trading should be introduced, among other things. A corporation should be formed to procure pepper directly from the cultivators. Then only will the cultivators get more price than they are getting now. May be, big businessmen may take objection to this idea. In this case the Commerce Ministry is surrendering to the wishes of the big monopoly traders. This is not an exception; in rubber also the Commerce Ministry is not fixing the minimum prices which will benefit the cultivators. If the Ministry takes such a step, it will be a booster to the cultivators and it can lead to a bumper production in the years to come. The second problem facing this industry is the export duty levied on this commodity. At present export duty levied on this commodity goes up to Rs. 1250 per ton. The Commerce Ministry is again in no mood to help the cultivators. Everybody knows that in essence this ultimately falls on the shoulders of the helpless cultivators....(Interruptions.) At this juncture it will not be out of place to

mention that no export duty is levied on the export of red chillies from Madras. While I am all in favour of this, I strongly demand that the same treatment should be given to pepper export also. In this regard too, the Central Government's attitude towards Kerala is highly discriminatory. Our Minister replied that there was no competition regarding the pepper industry. After the Second World War, there is competition.

After the second world war, competition in this field was intensified from Indonesia. Till that time, America was censuring 70 per cent of our production. Now they are buying only 20 per cent. At present, our main source of export is the socialist countries. When there is stiff competition, the price is reduced. Naturally, cultivators of pepper want for these cash crops. It inevitably led to our failure in this competition. While America is paying 27-1/2 cents for Indonesian pepper, we are getting 37-1/2 cents from socialist countries for the same quantity.

We can gainfully compete in the export of pepper if (1) the Central Government fix a minimum price of Rs. 750 per quintal, (2) the export duty levied on pepper is lifted and (3) State-trading is introduced in this business. These steps alone will help in removing the sufferings of the cultivators. This is not my individual opinion. This is the opinion of 2-1/2 crores of Kerala people. This issue came before the Kerala Assembly and all parties, including the Congress, jointly made these demands unanimously. That is why I am raising to this issue before Parliament to develop pepper cultivator and to help the peasants who are cultivating pepper. I appeal to the Government to take these measures.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : Sir, it is true that Kerala is the major producer of black pepper. Out of a national production of 23,000 tons, Kerala produces 21,000 tons. Naturally the hon. member from Kerala is concerned about it.

There are two important buyers of pepper...USA and USSR. There are two major producers...India and Indonesia. When there was a political crisis in Indonesia a few years ago, we got an advantage in the international market. When that crisis was over, Indonesia came back into the international market. Indonesia's production is much more than ours. That is why we are having some problems. Even then, we have succeeded in establishing good markets in East European countries. Our exports have not gone down during the last few years.

During 1967-68, the exports touched 25,000 tons. In 1963-64, it was only 19,000 tons. We are maintaining our foothold on the export market.

This main problem is about production and marketing aspects. Kerala plantations are very old...70 or 80 years old. They are not properly attended to from the point of view of agronomic practices. The Kerala Government is trying to see that extension services are in a position to help. Recently a new hybrid strain known as Panniyur strain No. 1 has been evolved and mention was made of it in the Kerala Assembly. The ICAR has taken up the issue and we have now put up a coordinated research project to help in the development of more useful strains, which will be giving higher yields. The new strain gives four times more yield than the old strain.

So the main solution lies in the fact that our productivity must go up. The present level of production is very low. It is only 225 kilogrammes per hectare. It is very poor. Unless the productivity grows up growing of black pepper is not going to be an economic activity.

I entirely agree with the Hon. Member that there are a lot of middle-men who exploit the producers in this trade. That is why we have suggested to the Kerala Government that they should organise cooperatives of producers in Kerala. We are prepared to help if such cooperatives are organised. Already one State-level organisation is there dealing in marketing and export of black pepper in Kerala. Last year that organisation in Kerala marketed about 15,000 quintals

of black pepper worth Rs. 52 lakhs. My point is, it is a very small portion, an insignificant portion, as compared to the total turnover. Our total exports are Rs. 13 crore; worth of black pepper. Unless cooperatives are organised and nothing comes in the way of the State Governments' organising cooperatives so that the cooperatives of producers will have a commanding position in the market I do not think we shall succeed in eliminating all influence of middle-men in this trade.

As far as exports are concerned, the Government of India would help these cooperatives even to export directly so that middle-men need not come in the way as all either in the way of exports or in the internal market.

There is one more suggestion that I would like to make. Effective marketing laws are very important for marketing such produce including black pepper. That is why we have suggested to the Kerala Government and other State Governments that they should have good and effective marketing laws. I am referring to laws relating to marketing of agriculture produce.

Therefore, organisation of cooperatives is one, enforcement of rigid marketing laws is the second and the third is the introduction of new strains. If these three activities are undertaken I am quite sure that we shall be in a position to solve some of the problems.

SHRI E. K. NAYANAR : What about export duty?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : After devaluation the prices went up and these profits would have been mopped up by middle-men if the Government of India would not have imposed this export duty. So export duty was imposed in order that the exporter should not mop up the margin.

The other point touched by the hon. Member was that the prices have gone very low. May I submit for the information of the hon. Member that the index of export price which stood at 24.8 in 1962-63 is now 41 as compared to 1952-53 base. As compared to 1962-63 the prices have improved in the international market despite stiff competition

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from Indonesia. Even in regard to domestic wholesale price the index in 1962-63 was 32.4 and it has now reached 40.6. This is related to base 1952-53.

SHRI VASUDEVAN NAIR (Peer-made) : 1962-63 prices were the lowest and therefore you cannot have a comparison with that.

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE ; Even the 1952-53 prices which have been taken as the base were unrealistic. As a result of the Second World War and the Japanese occupation of Indonesia the entire international trade got upset. India took advantage of that. The prices ruling immediately after the Second World war were very high. My only point is that as compared to the last few years the prices are looking up. If the Kerala Government succeed in organising very powerful cooperatives I am sure many of the problems of producers will be solved.

Sri, I have nothing more to add.

श्री रणधीर सिंह (रोहतक) : सभापति महोदय, मुझे आपकी मारफत मिनिस्टर साहब से यह कहना है कि किसान चाहे कपास पैदा करे या मूंगफली पैदा करे, हर चीज में कोई न कोई मुसीबत उसके सामने आ खड़ी होती है और उसको सही कीमत नहीं मिल पाती है। अगर कपास बोता है तो आप उसको बाहर से इम्पोर्ट करने लग जाते हैं अगर मूंगफली बोता है तो सोयाबीन ले आते हैं। इसके अलावा इस पर आपने एक हजार रुपये-पर-क्विंटल की एक्सपोर्ट ड्यूटी लगा रखी है। आपने खुद इस बात को माना है कि इस चीज की प्रोडक्टिविटी थोड़ी है, इस लिये उसको रिम्यूनेरेटिव प्राइसिज नहीं मिलती हैं केरल स्टेट एक बड़ी इन्कलावी स्टेट है, मैं चाहता हूँ कि कोलाबोरेशन के जरिये आप उन को सिखाइये ताकि उनकी प्रोडक्टिविटी बढ़ सके और किसानों को इन्सेन्टिव मिले। हजारों सालों से गरम-ससाला हिन्दुस्तान से रोम और दूसरी यूरोपियन मार्केट्स में विकता

रहा है, इससे काफी फौरन-एक्सचेन्ज मिलता है। इस लिये मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि किसानों को इन्सेन्टिव देने के लिये, फौरन-एक्सचेन्ज बढ़ाने के लिये सरकार क्या कदम उठा रही है ताकि वहां के किसानों का भला हो सके।

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : I have said that co-ordinated research project to develop new strains has been taken up. That means that there is coordination in research. I have also referred to Panniyur No. 1, a new strain which will give four times more. As regards prices, we referred the question to the Agricultural Prices Commission whether a minimum price can be fixed for chilly. We did not specifically refer to pepper, but chilly is also one of the spices. The Agricultural Prices Commission did not favour the fixation of minimum price for such commodities like chillies and other spices. But the prices are looking up as compared to the previous years.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा (मधुवनी) : मंत्री महोदय ने अपने जवाब में बतलाया है कि पिपर की मार्केट यू. एस. ए. और यू. एस. एस. आर. में बहुत ज्यादा है, हिन्दुस्तान का ज्यादा पिपर इन देशों के बाजारों में विकता है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि इन दोनों देशों में आपका पब्लिसिटी का जो कार्यक्रम है, क्या वह एक समान है? यदि एक सामान नहीं है तो उनमें कितना डिफरेंस है? मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि एनुअल प्लान के दौरान कितना आपने यू. एस. ए. को एक्सपोर्ट किया है और कितना यू. एस. एस. आर. को किया है?

चौथी पंच वर्षीय योजना की रूप रेखा तैयार हो गई है। आपने इस मुताल्लिक भी कुछ रूप रेखा बनाई होगी। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि चौथी पंच वर्षीय योजना में कितना एक्सपोर्ट किया जायगा, पिपर के लिये आपका कितना टारगेट है और कितने फौरन-एक्सचेन्ज की आप चौथी पंचवर्षीय योजना के दौरान उम्मीद करते हैं?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : As far as the Fourth Five Year Plan is concerned, we have quite an ambitious programme. As compared to the present production of 24,000 tons, by the end of the Fourth Plan we expect to have a production of about 42,000 tons. The central research station is popularising new strains.

As far as sales in USA and USSR are concerned, I have no break-up with me. The hon. Member may put a separate question to Commerce Ministry for the figures. But I may say that there is stiff competition in USA. So far as USSR and East European countries are concerned, since the mode of payment is rupee, we are getting a good market in those countries.

SHRI SHRI CHAND GOYAL (Chandigarh) : Pepper is very important for Kerala because it is one of the main cash crops in Kerala and it is also a very important foreign exchange earner. This question has been raised in this House in order to get certain concessions from the Central Government. Certain duties are being imposed, not by the State Government but by the Central Government.

I would like to know whether the Central Government is going to relax certain duties and taxes so that the producers of pepper can have better conditions.

Another important question is : Are you going to extend certain facilities to the producers to enable them to produce more and better quality pepper? Also, are you going to create better conditions for the export of pepper so that the producers can get a better price? The hon. Minister has certainly said that the prices are looking up, but the prices are not looking up to the extent that the producers expected and to the extent that producers of other cash crops are getting. So, what steps has the Government under contemplation to bring this price still higher and create more facilities?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : I have met many of these points. The only new point that the hon. Member has made is about the export duty. Domestic prices and international prices have some re-

lationship. As I have already submitted, after devaluation in order to mop up the profits which would have been earned by exporters this export duty was levied. As for as I am aware at present Government does not intend to change this policy approach in regard to this export duty.

श्री रघुवीर सिंह शास्त्री (वागपत) : श्री मान्, मंत्री महोदय ने कहा है कि हमारे मुकाबिले में इन्डोनेशिया एक ऐसा देश है जो उसी तरह का उत्पादन बड़ी मात्रा में मिर्चों का करता है। मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि इन्डोनेशिया में एक्सपोर्ट पर बोनस दिया जाता है और सीलोन ने, चूँकि आप ने एक्सपोर्ट पर बहुत हेवी ड्यूटी लगा रखी है, उसका फायदा उठाकर अपने उत्पादन को बहुत बढ़ा लिया है और यह दोनों देशों इस व्यापार में हमसे कम्पटीशन कर रहे हैं जिसका परिणाम है कि जो पूर्वी यूरोप के देश हैं—साफ्ट करेंसी एरिया, उसमें तो आपका थोड़ा बहुत निर्यात बढ़ा है लेकिन हार्ड करेंसी एरिया में निर्यात बहुत गिर गया है। जैसे कि अमरीका को सन् 60 में आपने 21135 टन भेजा जब कि 1967 में वह 8424 टन ही रह गया। यानी 57 परसेंट से घट कर 16 परसेंट ही रह गया। तो क्या इसका मुख्य कारण यही नहीं है कि आपने एक्सपोर्ट ड्यूटी बढ़ा रखी है, इसलिये आप दूसरे देशों के मुकाबले में ठहर नहीं सकते हैं जब तक कि उसी तरीके पर जैसे इन्डोनेशिया या सीलोन करता है, आप भी एक्सपोर्ट को प्रोत्साहित करें और उस पर ड्यूटी कम करें? एकमात्र यही तरीका मालूम पड़ता है जिससे ग्रीअस को ठीक पैसा मिल सके और ज्यादा से ज्यादा निर्यात बढ़ सके।

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : I cannot say to what countries exports have increased and decreased, but by and large I have already explained the position. I would however, repeat that in 1963-64 we exported about Rs. 6,91,00,000 worth of pepper and in 1964-65 worth Rs. 6,71,00,000; as compared to that during

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the last three years we exported Rs. 10,85,00,000, Rs. 11,28,00,000 and Rs. 13,02,00,000 worth. Last year it was Rs. 13,02,00,000. The total volume of exports has increased.

SHRI VASUDEVAN NAIR : I am sorry that the Hon. Minister has chosen only to say that he has advised the Kerala Government on all the issues that have been raised by my hon. friend, Shri Nayanar, in this House. As you know and as the hon. Minister has stated, actually this is a commodity which is almost exclusively for export and we get something like Rs. 13 crores worth of foreign exchange. We all know that such commodities are looked after not only by any State Government alone but by the Central Government also. So, the purpose of raising this discussion was to draw the attention of the Central Government to the urgent necessity of taking up at least 50 per cent of the responsibility of looking after this commodity that the State Government has. I am sorry that we are disappointed by the reply of the hon. Minister in that respect.

The main thing, as he himself has stated, is the question of increasing the productivity and of intensive research. The Hon. Minister said about a particular strain which they have developed. Many more strains have to be developed. Much more research has to be conducted and a lot of work has to be conducted in this field. The State Government alone cannot take up such a huge project. As you know, even cardamom has a Cardamom Board directly under the Central Government, which earns only Rs. 5 crores or Rs. 6 crores worth of foreign exchange at present.

All such commodities, coffee, rubber, tea, which earn foreign exchange are not left with the State Governments in States which produce these commodities. The Central Government comes into the picture. So, we would like to know whether, if not now, at least in the immediate future, the Central Government would consider the proposition to have some kind of a body on the lines of these commodity boards for pepper also. If the Agriculture Ministry alone cannot do

that, we would like to know whether they will at least moot the idea with the sister Departments and take some decision in the matter.

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : As far as the suggestion of having a commodity board for pepper is concerned, we can certainly examine it. We will give the highest consideration to the suggestion made by the Hon. Member.

I am sorry the Hon. Member did not properly appreciate me when I said that everything is being done by us to help the research activity. I also made a mention that a coordinated research project has been taken up. I also explained that a coordinated research project means hundred per cent Central assistance for doing research. The Centre is not giving up the responsibility at all. We want to help research in this particular field. We realise the importance of export of this commodity. That is why, even though black pepper production is confined only to a small area in Mysore and Kerala, we have taken up a coordinated research project. We are serious about it.

I am again sorry to say that Hon. Member has not properly understood me. I am one of those workers in the country who have done considerable work in the field of marketing. I have been responsible for organising a number of primary marketing societies. To my mind, there is no solution to the problem of agriculturists unless, as far as the marketing and improving of commercial crops is concerned, they organise themselves through the cooperatives and establish primary marketing societies. The Centre will give all necessary help. The Centre wants to assist all marketing organisations not only theoretically but even financially. It is, appropriately, a subject falling within the Kerala State Government's jurisdiction. We are prepared to help the Kerala Government if they want to organise the producers' cooperatives for marketing. May I mention that they can be more effective than a Government machinery—a suggestion has been made that it should be a State trading—manned only by civil services? The machinery manned by only civil services is not going to solve all our problems. A machinery manned and represented by producers'

representatives can be much more effective.

SHRI NAMBIAR (Tiruchirappalli) : For exports ?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE ; For export as well as internal consumption. Suppose there is more production. If there is an effective marketing organisation, it can mop up all surplus and store it.

Necessary finances can be made available, some storage facilities can be provided. These are some of the steps which may be taken by the State Government.

18.00 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till eleven of the clock on Thursday, February 27, 1969 Phalguna 8, 1890 (Saka).