

It appears that this statement of mines escaped Shri Guha's attention and he repeated the allegation on 18 April 1974.

Shri Guha has referred to a letter from the Director to me. The letter mainly demonstrates the difference of opinion between him and the Chairman and on these matters it would be more proper for the new Director to take suitable measures. I would however like to mention a few points raised in that letter.

Regarding the prevention of ragging, the Chairman has expressed the view that the punishment for excessive ragging should not be such as to ruin the career of the students. One may not agree with this view but it would be incorrect to say that Chairman has thereby encouraged ragging of an undesirable nature. The Director has also objected to the Heads of the Departments and other Faculty Members directly meeting the Chairman, without proceeding through the Director. I am of the view that this cannot be accepted in an academic institution. Faculty Members should be free to approach the Chairman or any other person and there should be no restriction on their academic freedom. The Director has also made a mention of financial irregularities allegedly to have been noticed in the accounts of the Students Gymkhana. The Board of Governors examined this question and took a decision. However, on this matter a further report has been called for from the Institute. If it is felt that there should be a more detailed investigation into the allegations of financial irregularities, I would be willing to take appropriate action. Earlier, allegations of irregularity have been made against the present Director himself. These will also be looked into.

Shri Guha has also drawn attention to a confidential letter dated 19 April 1974 sent to the Members of the

Senate by the Director. As certain allegations have been made in this letters, I do not think it proper to make any comments until the views of the Senate are before me

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: The whole matter can be enquired into. Let there be an enquiry committee. You should give a direction that there should be an enquiry committee with competent technologists from anywhere in India to go into the whole affairs of this I.I.T. Dr. Sathna can do it, I have no objection.

12.35 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. REPORTED SALT CRISIS IN WEST BENGAL

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. B. RANA): I lay a statement regarding the reported salt crisis in West Bengal, on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

During the discussions Shri Samar Guha has stated that the price of salt has gone up in West Bengal by 10 to 15 times and that it is being sold at the rate Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per kg. in rural areas.

The retail price of salt in West Bengal was between 23 to 37 paise per kg. In November, 1973 whereas in February, 1974, it was 25 to 42 paise per kg., The whole sale price for a bag of salt (one quintal) in West Bengal in November, 1973 was between Rs. 16.75 to Rs. 24.38 per quintal, while in February, 1974 it was between Rs. 20.17 to Rs. 33.50 per quintal. There has thus been an increase in price which is largely due to the fact that the State nominees have not lifted the full quota of 22,000 tonnes per month. Against the requirement of 77,000 tonnes from January, 1974 to 15th February, 1974, the actual lifting of salt has been about 62,000 tonnes only. Some increase in price is also due to the fact that the bunker surcharge has

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been increased by the Coastal Conference from Rs. 6.30 prior to December, 1973 to the existing level of Rs. 27.15 per tonne.

In March, 1974, on the request of the West Bengal Government 5,000 tonnes of salt have been released from the reserve stock of 25,000 tonnes in Salkia Salt Golhas to maintain the price level. Again in April—May, 1974, 5,000 tonnes more have been released exclusively for West Bengal.

We have also taken up with the Ministry of Transport and Shipping, the question of reducing the bunker surcharge to the original level. We have requested the State Governments to direct their nominees to lift their quotas in full. The Railways have also been requested to move 4 rakes of salt on a priority basis from Kandla to Calcutta. Under the existing Zonal Scheme, the requirements of West Bengal are met by sea from West coast and Tulicorina parts. A committee has been appointed to review the Zonal Scheme in order to improve the distribution and price of salt in all the North Eastern States including West Bengal.

The member has also referred to the difficulty in unloading of salt from the ships that are waiting at the Calcutta port. This is, a matter which is the concern of Ministry of Transport and Shipping who are being requested to attend to this on an urgent basis. It is however reported that out of the four ships that were to be unloaded in the middle of April 1974, three ships have been unloaded and the unloading of the fourth ships was delayed as it caught fire. In any case we have not allowed problems connected with unloading to obstruct the availability of salt. The release of 5,000 tonnes of salt in April—May 1974 was aimed at greater availability.

The reserves will be replenished when salt is unloaded.

As regards the possibility of development of salt in Contal coastal belt area, the West Bengal Government have reported that the total available salt land fully developed for salt production is hardly adequate to meet the requirements of the proposed soda ash and caustic soda plant at Haldia. The climatic condition in Orissa is not very favourable for production of salt. In case the State Governments come up with proposals for setting up salt works, such proposal will receive

12.36 hrs.

CORRECTION OF ANSWER TO
USQ No. 2862 RE EXPENDITURE
INCURRED ON SECURITY OF
MINISTERS

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
(SHRI F. H. MOHSIN): I lay a statement correcting the reply given on the 13th March, 1974 to Unstarred Question No. 2862 by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee regarding expenditure incurred on security of Ministers, on the Table of the House.

Statement

On 13th March, 1974 while furnishing a reply to the Unstarred Question No. 2862 in the House regarding annual expenditure incurred on security of the Ministers including the Prime Minister since 1971. I furnished following figures of expenditure:—