

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING AND HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING (SHRI UMA SHANKAR DIXSHIT): (a) The Low/Middle Income Group Housing Schemes which have been formulated by the Ministry of Works and Housing and are being implemented by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations provide inter-alia that the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations may earmark 33-1/3 per cent of the total number of houses built by them under these schemes for allotment to the State Government and the Central Government Employees on rental basis only.

(b) and (c) The information has been called for from the Government of Bihar and will be laid on the Table of the House as soon as it is received.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we take up call attention motion.

Mr. Venkatasubbaiah.

श्री मुक्तिद्वार सिंह मलिक (राहतक):

अध्यक्ष महोदय, हरयाने और पंजाब के अंदर इनकी जबरदस्त कानून टीका की हुआल चल रहा है...

अध्यक्ष महोदय: अभी नहीं अभी तो मैंने कानून अटेंशन के लिए पुनरा है।

श्री मुक्तिद्वार सिंह मलिक: \*

अध्यक्ष महोदय: आप को मैंने इजाजत नहीं दी। आप जो कुछ कह रहे हैं वह रिकॉर्ड पर नहीं जायगा।

12.02 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Reported hold-up of a cashew kernels consignment bound for USSR at the Cochin Harbour.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH (NANDYAL): I call the attention of

the Minister of Finance to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

'Reported hold-up of a consignment of cashew kernels bound for USSR at the Cochin Harbour.'

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN Sir, Imports and Exports under the Long-Term Trade and Payments Agreements with the Socialist countries are made according to the provisions made in the Trade Protocols which are concluded each year with the Governments of the Socialist countries. The Confidential-Letters, which are exchanged at the time of the signing of the Trade Protocols, provide for the modification and addition to the provisions by mutual consent.

In this particular instance, the Ministry of Foreign Trade received a telex on 4th November from the Cashew Export Promotion Council, Ernakulam, saying that the shipment of 475 tons of cashew kernels to the U. S. S. R. have been held up as the Trade plan provision for the year had been exhausted. In their subsequent telegram received on 10th November, the Council mentioned the quantity held up as 2009 tons. Because of this disparity in figures, the matter was taken up by the Ministry of Foreign Trade with the Deputy Chief Controller of Imports and Exports. After getting the correct figures from the Deputy Chief Controller of Imports and Exports and on the request of U. S. S. R. Trade Representation, the Government have allowed on 1.12.1972, the shipment of 4,000 tons against the Trade Plan provision for 1973.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: from the statement read out by the Minister it looks as though it is a sort of an action taken after the calling attention was tabled by the Members.

The statement does not give a convincing answer to the points raised and also the situation that has arisen there. The Soviet Union is importing one-third of the total quantity of our export of 50,000 tonnes of cashew kernels valued at about Rs. 70 crores. At a time when we are not able to sell our traditional goods to hard currency areas, the Soviet Union has been importing large quantities of this item and this has helped us a great lot. By the recent protocol, Soviet Union is slowly becoming one of the topmost importers of our traditional goods. This sort of procedural delay and this sort of dialogue between the Foreign Trade Ministry and the Indian Finance Ministry has gone on like this for one month. Even on the 10th November, according to the statement of the Finance Minister, this clarification was sought. It has been stated that since they have exceeded the year's quota of export they are not in a position to lift the embargo. That is why the whole thing has been held up.

Sir, as a matter of fact, we should have been able to take advantage of the excess quantity of export asked for by the Soviet Government. This discrepancy of 2000 tonnes and 4000 tonnes, could very well have been resolved and verified over the Telex message or at the level of some appropriate authorities. This need not have taken one month for the Customs Department or for the Finance Ministry to get clarifications.

May I know whether by this unwarranted delay the industry has suffered a great loss in Kerala? Has the industry suffered a loss of Rs. 1 lakh per day due to this reason? Will the hon. Minister tell whether 1.25 lakhs of employees engaged in this industry are being affected by this delay? If so, may I know whether any action will be taken against those officers who have been found to be lethargic, who have not done their duty properly when we are in need of foreign exchange, when we are in

need of boosting up of our exports to such of those countries where our traditional goods are finding difficulties? Will the Government even now make known to us the items that are to be exported to East European countries? Will they keep in touch with the concerned importing countries to see that such things do not recur again? May I have an assurance that immediately they come to know of such a thing, they will take quicker action to remedy the whole thing? Could not the whole procedure be systematised so as to facilitate exporters not encountering such difficulties? These are my points.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: I understand the hon. Member's anxiety for keeping up the exports. I have a clean conscience and I can say that the customs officers have not been at fault. The agreement was about certain X quantity. When this quantity was fulfilled, to go beyond that is not the jurisdiction of customs officers. It depends upon trade agreement. It could be done by mutual consent of both the parties. It was only when the Soviets took the initiative in modifying the thing with a view to allow the export as against the agreement of the next year that the customs officer could do anything about it. The customs officers on their own could not go beyond the terms of the trade agreement. So, if there is any inconvenience, over which we are all very unhappy, I do not think that I can put the blame at the doors of the customs officers....

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: But the order was executed with the consent of the Foreign Trade Ministry....

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: But the hon. Member is asking questions of me now....

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: But is there no coordination between the Foreign Trade Ministry and the Finance Ministry? The agreement had

[SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH]

been executed by the Foreign Trade Ministry.....

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN:  
Even if that be so, as I said, the agreement for this year was for a certain quantity X. We find that the exports had already exceeded that quantity X. If it is at all to be modified, it cannot be modified unilaterally by the Foreign Trade Ministry also; there will have to be a demand for it from the other country, and that did take certain time.....

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH:  
But is that quantity X not known to the Foreign Trade Ministry?

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN:  
Possibly, the hon. Member's calling-attention-notice may have certainly hastened that process. I am prepared to give him that credit.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (गुवातिर) :  
अध्यक्ष महोदय ऐसा लगता है कि सरकार का दायां हाथ क्या करता है—यह बाहने हाथ का पता नहीं रहता है ....

श्री बलबन्तराव चव्हाण : सब पता रहता है ।

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : वित्त मंत्रालय और विदेश व्यापार मंत्रालय में कोई समन्वय नहीं है तालमेल नहीं है । और सोवियत रूस के साथ कोई समझौता किया गया था तो क्या उस समझौते के बारे में विदेश व्यापार मंत्रालय और वित्त मंत्रालय के जरिये कस्टम को सूचना नहीं दी जा सकती थी ?

अध्यक्ष जी यह पहला मौका नहीं है—अभी पिछले दिनों रॉय स्कैन्डल के बारे में इस तरह की चीज सामने आई थी जिससे स्पष्ट हुआ था कि वित्त मंत्रालय और विदेश व्यापार मंत्रालय तालमेल से काम नहीं कर रहे हैं ।

अभी वित्त मंत्री जी ने कहा कि एक समझौता हुआ था उसमें एक मात्र निश्चित थी और कस्टम अधिकारियों ने जब उस मात्रा से ज्यादा माल चढ़ाया तो रोक लिया । मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि यह किस तारीख को हुआ ? कस्टम अधिकारियों ने जब माल रोक लिया तो विदेश व्यापार मंत्रालय के ध्यान में यह बात लाने में कितने दिन लगे । यह केरल की बन्दरगाह का मामला था संचार के साधन वहाँ से उपलब्ध थे दोनों मंत्रालयों के केन्द्रीय कार्यालय दिल्ली में स्थित हैं यह मामला एक या दो दिन में तय किया जा सकता था । लेकिन सरकार सोती रही । समाचार पत्रों को धन्यवाद देना चाहिए जब उन्होंने यह चीज छापी कि पांच हजार टन काजू वहाँ रुका पड़ा है और फिर हम ने यहाँ ध्यान दिलाने का नोटिस दिया और वित्त मंत्री जी कहते हैं कि आप के नोटिस की वजह से कार्रवाई जरा जल्दी हुई है । क्या सरकार की गाड़ी हमारे नोटिस के कोयले के बिना नहीं चक सकती यह गाड़ी रुक जाय यदि पार्लियामेंट के मेम्बर अखबारों में पढ़कर काल-एटैन्शन का नोटिस न दें ? .....

अध्यक्ष महोदय : तो फिर आप के लिए क्या रह जायेगा ?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : हम दूसरा कोयला निकाल लेंगे ।

लेकिन मेरा निवेदन है कि यह सरकार की तत्परता के बारे में कोई बहुत अच्छी टिप्पणी नहीं है कि पहले चीज समाचार पत्रों में छपी

है फिर संसद में उठाई जाती है और बात देखिये—इस वक्तव्य में कहा गया है -1-12-1972 को यह आदेश दिया गया है कि माल जा सकता है। मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि महीने भर की देर क्यों लगी? कस्टम अधिकारियों ने अपने कर्तव्य का पालन किया तो वित्त मंत्रालय और विदेश व्यापार मंत्रालय अपने कर्तव्य का पालन करने में विफल क्यों रहे? क्या दोनों मंत्रालयों में तालमेल है? यदि तालमेल है तो इस तरह की घटना क्यों घटी? मंत्री महोदय ने कहा कि वे बड़े दुखी हैं कि माल रुका रहा और थोड़ा नुकसान हुआ। क्या यह सच है कि उद्योगों से और रुपया वसूल किया गया क्योंकि उनका माल वहाँ पड़ा रहा और उनसे उसका किराया लिया गया? गलती सरकार की है और क्षति उद्योग की उठानी पड़ी है। क्या वित्त मंत्री घोषणा करेंगे कि काजू के व्यापारियों की उनकी शक्ति नोति के कारण जो नुकसान उठाना पड़ा है उसका दण्ड उनको नहीं भुगतना पड़ेगा और भविष्य में इस तरह के तालमेल के धर्मों की कोई घटना नहीं होने दी जावेगी?

**SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN:**  
 I think I have tried to explain the matter as clearly as possible. The question is not about any co-ordination between the Foreign Trade Ministry and any other Ministry, because the Foreign Trade Ministry on its own also could not have taken action unless there was a further demand as against the provision for the next year by the Soviets. This process took time. What is to be done about it?

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:**  
 For more than a month, there was no tal mel.

**SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN:**  
 It is not a question of tal mel for more

than a month. The initiative had to come from the Soviet Union for modification of the terms so that we can supply against the next year's trade agreement. This could not have been done unilaterally by either the Foreign Trade Ministry or by the Customs; The Customs, of course, could not have done it at all because it is not an executive agency for certain trade agreements etc. Naturally, it has to work within that framework. So there is no question of any lack of co-ordination. This thing could not have been done earlier because the Export Promotion Council also took it up with Government on 1st November; and then again they gave some different figure. That took nearly ten days. After that, we had to take up the matter with the Deputy Chief Controller of Imports and Exports. Then we got the real figure. Immediately we acted on it.

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी:** व्यापारियों को जो नुकसान हुआ है वहाँ माल पड़ा रहने के कारण उनसे जो दया वसूल किया जा रहा है उसके बारे में उत्तर नहीं आया?

**MR. SPEAKER:** He asked about the *vyparis*.

**SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN:**  
 We are not responsible for that.

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:**  
 Why should the goods have been allowed to be brought in the harbour? Who is responsible for this muddle?

**SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN:**  
 There is no muddle. He unnecessarily sees a muddle where there is none.

**SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPA** (Tellicherry): I have carefully read the statement made by the hon. Minister and the answers he has given. I should say that in a way he tried to evade the question, the bigger question involved in the whole episode. Firstly, I dispute the claim made by the Minister that they got two telegrams:

[SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPA]

of 4th and 10th November, and that was all the information about it. Then he made it entirely a case of figures. But here I have a telegram a copy of which I have sent to the Ministers. It is from the export organisation. They say that they have sent telegrams on 4th, 7th, 13th, 15th and 21st November to the Foreign Trade Ministry. I have seen the telegram which was sent on 13th. Till that date, the Ministry was sleeping. It never even cared to reply to the telegrams sent by the export organisation. I do not know what sort of effective functioning is there.

Then another aspect. It is a fact that in the Ministry of Foreign Trade and in the Ministry of Finance under these Ministers, there are big bureaucrats sitting whose interest is quite in tune with the interest of the US trade. In the *Hindu* dated 2nd December there is a news item which says that 'the CPI circles allege that pressure from the American interests is holding up customs clearance for export to Russia of 2 lakh cases containing 3,000 tonnes of processed cashew kernel which are lying in the Cochin port'. The Minister might jolly well say that it may be a CPI allegation. But there is another part of the report which follows that American buyers, after the Soviet Union had bought 20,000 tonnes of cashew kernels from Kerala, tried to depress the prices of cashew and in that situation, the Government further entered into negotiation with the Soviet Union. My friend Mr. Venkatasubbaiah had correctly put it that the Soviet Union came to the rescue of the cashew industry and to our economy. At least in this context, they had agreed to buy 6,000 tonnes worth about Rs. 6 crores. This fact was known to the Ministry of Foreign Trade. This report says that following efforts by the American buyers to depress the prices Russia agreed to take 6,000 tonnes more, worth about Rs. 6 crores and this, according to them, was approved by the Union Foreign Trade Ministry. The hon. Minister had said that they had to take time to get the consent of the

Soviet Union and delay was caused in one form or the other. Here the report says that the export of 6,000 tonnes was agreed upon with the consent of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. I do not know whether the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Ministry of Finance had difference over this issue. If that be so, why should industry suffer or why should tens of thousands of employees in Kerala suffer? This is not the first time that these things had happened in Cochin customs? I do not want to put the blame on the customs authorities. I would like to put the blame on you. I mean on Mr. Chavan through the Speaker last year it was the coir industry which received the onslaught and coir exports to East European countries were under an embargo and after high level intervention they were kind enough to send a telex message at that time also. I should like to know, if you could send a telex message at the last moment, after taking one or two months to clear up the whole matter, after getting a letter from the Chief Minister, after the Members of Parliament run after you, why cannot you clear up these things in time so that the industry and the workers will not suffer and the country will not lose their good trade relations with friendly trade partners. I should like the Minister to explain on this point. This is a matter which vitally affects the interests of Kerala.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN:

I should like to put facts again before the hon. Member. I was trying to give him facts. The agreement for 1972 was for about 20,000 tonnes. By November as a matter of fact nearly 2,000 tonnes of exports had taken place and the agreement was completed. Unless there is some further arrangement between the Soviet Government and our Government nothing could have been done. The agreement for the next year was on 25th November. After that agreement was signed, for additional allotment a request came from the Soviets on 28th November

and action was taken on the 1st December. I do not know whether time was lost. If the merchants there had anticipated to exceed the trade agreements the Finance Ministry or the Foreign Trade Ministry could not do that. There was impatience on their part to export; I can understand it. As I said, after 28th November action was taken on 1st December. Even then if you think there was delay, I am sorry I cannot convince the hon. Member.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPA: He did not answer my question....

MR. SPEAKER: No more questions.

SHRI D.K. PANDA (Bhanjanagar): The whole question is, the very statement starts with imports and exports under long-term trade. When there is long-term trade with any country, the questions of excess or less than the target fixed are not very vital and have no statutory implication. The hon. Minister himself has already admitted that though the agreement was for 20,000 tonnes, already 21,000 tonnes have been exported. How was it done? So, the excess of 1000 tonnes cannot be treated as an illegality. Therefore, nothing can prevent their exporting an excess quantity of cashew kernels. Under such circumstances, when several representations have been made by the traders and by the very corporation which is also a public undertaking, how is it that the ministry could not take action earlier?

Secondly, how could the very consignment reach the port? There must have been some authorisation, certificate or some such thing. Once it reached the port, did the customs officers withhold it with the consent of or under the directions of the Finance Ministry or they have done it independently? Under such circumstances may I know whether the Government is going to frame some rules so that

in future no such thing happens in view of earning more foreign exchange?

THE DEPUTY-MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): I am afraid hon. members have grossly misunderstood the situation....

SHRI D. K. PANDA: My question is directed to the Finance Minister. Several reports are there in the newspapers that because the Finance Ministry was in disagreement with the Foreign Trade Ministry, such a thing has happened. It is for the Finance Minister to answer.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: I thought perhaps the hon. Member was mentioning Foreign Trade Ministry very often and so, the Deputy-Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, who is present, might throw some light which may perhaps convince you.

The main question he asked was how it reached the harbour. It can reach the harbour. That is a matter between the harbour authorities and the merchants. Customs come into the picture only when the loading takes place to see whether it is authorised loading or not. If unauthorised loading takes place, certainly you would have blamed us then also. (Interruptions). When Export was taking place in the course of one year, ultimately it was found that it has already exceeded the target. This marginal excess is certainly understandable. Knowing that already excess has taken place, you cannot allow that. (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: They are also unloading their questions.

SHRI D. K. PANDA: How did these 400 tonnes reach there?

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: Even the authorities themselves were not sure of the figure. It was 400 tonnes; within a few days it became 2,000 tonnes.