

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT: Sir, this will be provided by us.'

SHRI SOMNATH RATH: Sir, is there any provision in the contract for training of Vietnamese personnel in various disciplines of the oil industry? If so, what is the provision?

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT: Sir, of course, there is a provision to undertake training of Vietnamese personnel. This training programme of the Vietnamese personnel has been finalised. The cost in the first phase of the programme will be 2,55,000 \$ approximately. In the subsequent phases, the training programme will be taken up by HIL in consultation with the Petrovietnam.

Hike in Vital Drug Prices

*85. SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA†: SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of 300 medicines, many of them vital drugs for treating serious ailments have shot up steeply as has been reported in the Hindustan Times of 10 June, 1988;

(b) if so, the reasons for increasing the prices of drugs after the new Drugs (Prices Control) Order was introduced;

(c) whether it is a fact that the prices of certain drugs have been increased by 420 per cent;

(d) whether the drug manufacturing companies have sought the permission of Government before increasing the prices;

(e) if not, the action taken by Government against those companies; and

(f) the efforts made by Government to check the rising trend of prices of drugs?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO): (a) to (f). A Statement is given below:

STATEMENT

(a) to (f). Most vital drugs for serious ailments are under price control. As per the provisions of DPCO, 1987, manufacturers of decontrolled medicines are free to revise prices. However, Government is keeping a watch and has intervened wherever found necessary. After Government's intervention, 15 manufacturers brought down the prices of 55 packs of formulations/bulk drugs to reasonable levels.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I seek your kind indulgence and your kind protection.

My categorical question was whether it is a fact that the prices of certain drugs have been increased by 420 per cent. Sir, you may kindly go through the Statement. Sir, it is a five-line statement which the Minister should have read in the House, but he has not read it for concealing the truth. However, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the prices which are not under the Drug Price Control Order have increased tremendously in the recent past? In this connection, may I categorically know from the hon. Minister whether the prices of drugs for treating heart diseases, cancer, vaccines against snake bites, and all bulk vitamins which are used by common mass, along with calcium and iron products had been increased recently to 200 to 400%. If so, what are the reasons? May I know from the hon. Minister whether the increase of price of drugs is affecting severely the common mass? If so, how can we achieve "Health for all" by 2,000 A.D. if the common mass cannot purchase medicines whose prices are tremendously increased?

PROF. N.G.RANGA: Are you able to follow it?

SHRI J.VENGAL RAO: According to the latest DPCO, under category I, 27 essential drugs, selected by Health and Family Welfare Ministry which are very useful to common men are under control. Under category II, 139 drugs are controlled. The others are decontrolled drugs. If there is any abnormal price increase, the Government has the right to bring it under the control of Category II. We are not allowing increase of more than 100% in the price of any drugs.

The hon. Member mentioned about vaccines and sera. The production of vaccines and sera in the country is very low. We are importing them from other countries. The total import bill for this is Rs.2.31 crores. The indigenous production is very low. The manufacture of this item is not done by private party. Only Government and semi-Government agencies are producing vaccines and sera in the country.

SHRICHINTAMANI JENA: May I know from the hon. Minister whether some essential drugs which are available in foreign countries are not manufactured in our country and perhaps the drug manufacturers are taking the plea, especially the private monopolies and giving the reason that R & D for producing these medicines would be more costly for which, they are not manufacturing. May I know from the hon. Minister, whether the Government is thinking to give R & D support to public undertakings which are manufacturing drugs so that they may manufacture these types of drugs which are most essential for the human beings.

SHRI J.VENGAL RAO: We are manufacturing the most essential drugs the IDPL and Hindustan anti-biotics in the public sector. We are also exporting drugs to other countries.

SHRI SURESH KURUP: He is not aware of what is going on in the drug industry. (*Interruptions.*)

SHRI J.VENGAL RAO: Please allow me to answer.

MR.SPEAKER: Don't interrupt. You carry on.

SHRI J.VENGAL RAO: He has mentioned about the foreign manufacturers. We will not allow them in this country to have such right. We will control them. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: It is not like this, Mr. Kurup.

Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Sir, I also seek your protection.

MR. SPEAKER: I will extend all the protection, Madam.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: I have never seen such a cynical answer to such a vital question.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it statistical answer?

PROF. MADHÜ DANDAVATE: You want a clinical answer!

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: The statement says that most vital drugs for serious ailments are under price control. I would like to know whether the Minister is aware that recently a study was made by All India Consumers Association where they said, that 3 times increase of all the drugs is likely to be achieved. In some cases, it has already been achieved.

MR.SPEAKER: Is it going to be achieved?

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: No, it has already been achieved. A 420 per cent increase in the drug prices has been referred to in this question and that has not been answered. Is not the drug so vital for the people? What is that drug? I would like to ask whether the hon. Minister is aware that Bharat Upbhokta Sahkar, a Consumer Cooperative Society in a study found that price of six tablets of iopanoic acid used in arresting cardiac failure and liver insufficiency has gone up from Rs.4.47 to Rs.23.19 — an increase of 420 per cent. Is cardiac arrest a non-serious ailment?

MR. SPEAKER: I think you have personal experience.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Yes, Sir, you are also concerned. But you don't give me opportunity for supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to guard you.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Is it not a fact that this rise in price is due to the New Drug Price Control Order? Is it not a fact that as against the 268 drugs which were under the price control under the 1978 DPCO, at present, under the present 1987 DPCO only 151 drugs are under control basket? Is it also not a fact that the mark-ups for controlled drugs under the current DPCO are substantially higher than the previous ones? Is it also not a fact that even 26 drugs for the National Health Programme has a mark-up of 75 per cent as against 40 per cent of the previous DPCO? Are these measures supposed to bring down the prices? Or, are these measures which are aimed at pushing up the prices? I would also like to know whether the beneficiary of all these are mostly the multi-national companies and the victims are the ordinary people. I would like to know the categorical answer from the hon. Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, you are satisfied. I have given the fullest support.

(Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Don't give cynical answer but clinical answer.

MR. SPEAKER: Medical Answer.

SHRI J.VENGAL RAO: About the first question, I have not yet become cynical. It would take some more time.

MR.SPEAKER: He will become more chivalrous.

SHRI J.VENGAL RAO: As the hon. Member has mentioned, according to Health Department, 27 essential drugs are under Category No.I and 139 under Category No.II. As the hon. Member has mentioned, there are some drugs in respect of which some abnormal increase in price was there. But, on the intervention of the Government, we called all the drug manufacturers for a discussion. They reduced the prices below 100 per cent mark-ups. *(Interruptions)* These drug prices were fixed in 1981. Now it is 1988. The price of the raw-materials and the components of the drugs has gone up. That is why we allow 75 per cent in the Category No. I and we allow 100 per cent maximum mark ups. The Government has also got control to increase up to 25 per cent. The hon. Member has mentioned about the drug in respect of cardiac arrest. If it is true, I will take a note of it and I will bring it under control.

MR. SPEAKER: Now I will ask him to bring it under control.

(Interruptions)

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI: Hon Speaker, Sir, this is definitely a technical question. The Minister of Industry in charge

of Chemicals is finding it much more difficult to answer the technical aspect of the subject. About the life-saving drugs, we should have some deep common-sense. Without knowing the medical sciences also, we should have some common-sense. Take the case of tetanus, take the case of cancer which can be treated by chemotherapy, take the case of asthma; these are life-saving drugs used for these diseases. Will the hon. Minister categorically answer as to what was the cost of tetanus vaccine last year and what is the cost of tetanus vaccine now, what was the cost of Aronophylin injection/ tablet last year and what is the cost now, what was the cost of Adriamycin last year and what is the cost now? I know, the cost of particularly these drugs has gone up more than two hundred per cent. I want to know whether the hon. Minister will investigate the matter and give a concrete answer so that the indigenous drug manufacturers can make the formulation without depending on the multinationals abroad.

MR. SPEAKER: He has already replied.

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO: If the hon. Member sends the list to me, I will certainly send a reply to him.

SHRI SURESH KURUP: During the last Session I had asked the Minister one supplementary question regarding the prices of drugs. He evaded the question and you assured me you would get me the answer. For your information, Sir, I have not got any answer from the Ministry...

MR. SPEAKER: So, far, you also sidetracked it! Why did you not inform me?

SHRI SURESH KURUP: Now, with your permission, I repeat that question. One of the most important factors for the rise in drug prices is that these companies are using the brand names of their own. They are not willing to use the generic names, and

the Government is now compelling them to use the generic names. Various consumer organisations have been repeatedly demanding use of generic names. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry will take steps to compel the companies to use the generic names for medicines. If he is not aware of this, he can ask Mr. Vasant Sathe who was a member of the Hathi Committee.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: He is a veterinary doctor.

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO: He is a veterinary doctor, Sir!

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Mr. Vasant Sathe or Dr. Bhoi?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I am not a doctor at all, either veterinary or otherwise.

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO: I have taken note of what the hon. Member has said. I will definitely send a reply.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHANTILAL PURSHOT-TAMBHAI PATEL: I would like to know whether it is a fact that manufacturers of drugs donate generously to the Congress fund following a steep hike in the drug prices?

MR. SPEAKER: Next question.

[*English*]

Irregularities in Accounts of Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking

*86. SHRI MOHD. MAHFOOZ ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that gross