

PROF. N.G. RANGA : I do not know whether you have followed these intricate discussions and debates. I would like to suggest that the hon. Minister who depends entirely on the recommendations of the Agricultural Prices and Costs Commission, should refer these details to the Agricultural Prices and Costs Commission and ask them to reexamine the whole position.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G.S. DHILLON) : So far as the basic criterion is concerned, that is exactly the same when Rao Saheb was himself the Minister. If he referred it to CACP. We will also refer it to this. I hope he also accepted it. It is with Food Ministry and State Governments.

So far as the ruling prices are concerned, we can look into it.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : I am sorry to point out to the hon. Minister that the Agriculture Prices Commission has got nothing to do with the price that is to be given to the farmers. It is for the Central Government and the State Governments to determine. The CAPC have nothing to do with the price to be paid to farmers by the sugar factories.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : This should not be referred to the Agriculture Prices Commission. It should be straight-away on the basis of the profits earned by the industries.

(Interruptions)

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : So far as 1987-88 prices are concerned, my hon. colleague Shri H.K.L. Bhagat had already given an assurance to the House that the revision of price is under consideration. So I can repeat it that "it is under consideration."

(Interruptions)

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : Revision of which price ?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Statutory minimum price ?

(Interruptions)

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : Statutory

price is already very high. It helps the sugar industry only to get higher price for the levy sugar. They can look into it.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have got a Short Notice Question, gentlemen. What are you doing ?

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

[English]

Hike in Air India Airfare

3. †**PROF. K.V. THOMAS :**

SHRI SURESH KURUP :

SHRI K. MOHANDAS :

PROF. P.J. KURIEN :

SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Air India has recently increased its fare on the Gulf sector ; if so, the percentage of increase and the reasons therefor ;

(b) whether the other airlines are charging comparatively less fare than the Air India on this sector ;

(c) whether the passengers from India, particularly from the State of Kerala, are very much unhappy over this increase ; and

(d) whether it is proposed to review the decision so as to reduce the fare to bring it at par with other airlines ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) Yes, Sir. Air India pursuant to International Air Transport Association (IATA) Agreement have increased air fares from all points in India to U.A.E., Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. The percentage of increase is 4% except in the case of Bahrain where the increase is 5.9%.

(b) All International Air Transport Association members are required to charge

same fares as have been established at IATA Forum. No member airline can charge different fares unilaterally.

(c) A telex message has been received from Chief Minister of Kerala in this regard.

(d) While Air India had taken up the question of reducing air fare on Gulf Sector in the IATA forum, the proposal was not accepted by member Airlines. As already stated, IATA established fares cannot be changed unilaterally.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS : Gulf sector is one among the four sectors which gives huge profit to Air India. But I am very sorry to say that Air India is making this huge profit in the Gulf sector by looting the hardearned money of the Indians working in the Gulf countries. Why am I saying this? If you study the air fare charges of different Airlines, you will know the difference. For example from Delhi to Abu Dhabi or Dubai, the Air India is charging Rs. 3895 while the other Airlines, like the Emirate Airlines or Gulf Air are charging only Rs. 2861, i.e. a difference of Rs. 1034.

To give you another example, the Air India is charging Rs. 6007 while the other Airlines are charging only Rs. 4528. The difference is Rs. 1479. This is a very big difference. I cannot understand, when the Minister says that the charges are fixed by IATA why the Air India is charging so heavily when the other Airlines are charging much lesser. On this again, they charge four per cent to six per cent more. This was recently imposed by the Air India. May I know from the hon. Minister, while the other Airlines have reduced their charges and on the basis of this, whether the Air India will also reduce the present increase as well as the earlier increase?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : First of all, as I had mentioned, no Airlines can charge fare other than approved in the IATA forum.

As far as I am concerned, if you can produce me a ticket which shows that this much money...if you can show me a ticket on which is printed that they have paid less than Air India, probably I could take it up in this forum, and then see that whatever is

possible, is done.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS : It is done by under-cuts, not by printing it on the ticket. When other airlines are having these under-cuts, why should our airline not give the benefit?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : I am surprised that I am being asked to do something which is exactly not right. Secondly, because of this problem, from 1st January, the Kuwaiti Government is coming up with a strict law that any airline, may be their own airlines, which does this kind of a thing, is going to be penalized.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS : One more question...

MR. SPEAKER : No. Now Shri Suresh Kurup.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : There is a standing complaint from the people of Kerala that Air India is charging exorbitant rates in Gulf-Trivandrum sector. In March 1984 the Kerala legislature has passed an unanimous resolution requesting Air India to reduce the fare.

You are not allowing anybody to operate in this sector, any other airline. You have monopolised this sector. As I understand it, from 1979 onwards, Gulf Air has been repeatedly requesting Government of India for permission to operate in this sector. You have denied it for the flimsy reason that Trivandrum is not an international airport.

The point is that Air Lanka is operating a flight from Colombo to the Gulf countries. They are giving concessions, so that the passenger can travel by giving Rs. 1000 less. So, if he goes *via* Colombo, the charge is Rs. 1000 less. More and more passengers are depending on Air Lanka flight. My point is whether Government of India will allow other airlines to operate in this sector, or whether you will reduce the charges.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : As far as reducing the charges is concerned, I have already replied to Prof. Thomas; but I would like to inform the House and the hon. Member that the foreign airlines can come only on regular, scheduled flights to

the international airports. As per today's norms, only four airports in the country are recognized as international airports—Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi ; but we do allow charters to come to other parts of the country. If Gulf Air or any other airline would like to bring charters to Trivandrum, I will be the first to allow it.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Mohandas, Prof. Kurien and Shri Vijayaraghavan are not here. Yes, now Mr. Vakkom Purushothaman.

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN : I do not want to say that the hon. Minister has been misinformed by the officers, even though I honestly believe so.

The Kerala State Government, Kerala legislature, almost all the MPs from Kerala and many associations have all represented before the Minister. Always we get the reply that it is decided by IATA. We are prepared to give evidence before the hon. Minister if he is willing to conduct an enquiry, viz. that our poor people—labourers and coolies working in Gulf countries—are being looted by Air India by charging exorbitant rates.

I would like to know whether the Minister is willing to conduct an enquiry. We are prepared to give evidence.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : The question of an enquiry would come, if something is brought to my notice, with some documents. I know that this kind of a thing is being done by the other airlines ; and I cannot say that Air India should do this. But what I have already suggested to Air India is that the maximum commission which is allowed, under the rules, should also be given back to the passengers. But I cannot break the rules. I do not expect a national carrier to come and say that it would break the rules.

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN : All the MPs, irrespective of party affiliations, expect you to conduct an enquiry.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : They have increased the charge twice in a span of three years. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : No ; I cannot. I cannot preach ..*(Interruptions)*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Modernisation of Ginning and Pressing in Cotton Industry

*435. SHRI S.M. GURADDI :

SHRI H.N. NANJE GOWDA :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have a proposal to modernise ginning and pressing practices in cotton industry ;

(b) if so, the main features thereof ; and

(c) to what extent this proposal will help both domestic and external consumers ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G.S. DHILLON) : (a) Ministry of Textiles do not have any scheme on modernisation of cotton ginning and pressing units outside the cooperative fold ; nor is there any proposal in this regard. For units in the Cooperative Sector, National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) is operating a scheme on modernisation of existing units and establishment of modern cotton ginning and pressing units.

(b) Under the NCDC Scheme, 80 per cent of the project cost is made available to the State Governments in the cooperatively under-developed States as loan and 65 per cent in other States. The balance is to come as share capital from the State Governments and members. For tribal areas, NCDC provides 60 per cent loan and 20 per cent subsidy to the State Governments to be passed on to the Society. The Scheme provides for modern covered storage facilities, pneumatic handling/conveying of kapas, pre-cleaning of kapas, modern double roller gins and incorporation of appropriate conveying system, wherever feasible.

(c) After modernisation, trash percentage will be reduced considerably and quality cotton will be available to the domestic and external consumer.

Non-Availability of Satellite Transponder

*439. SHRI V.S. KRISHNA IYER :
Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND