

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Wednesday, March 19, 1980/Phalguna
29, 1901 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Increase in Packing Charges of Cement

*122. SHRI SHIV KUMAR SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have increased the packing charges of cement recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof, together with the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether such charges have been increased in Madhya Pradesh also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA): (a) and (b). Packing charges for cement are fixed every quarter. Accordingly, the packing charges for cement for the current quarter (January—March 1980) were fixed on 31-12-79. The amount of packing charges so fixed was Rs. 66.94 per tonne of cement as compared to Rs. 63.16 for the previous quarter. The increase in packing charges was on account of increase in the price of jute and also on account of the fact that the minimum percentage of usage of new bags for packing cement was raised from 75 per cent to 80 per cent.

(c) Packing charges fixed by the Central Government are uniformly

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applicable to all the States/Union Territories including the State of Madhya Pradesh.

श्री शिव कुमार सिंह ठाकुर : अध्यक्ष महोदय, हमारे देश में सीमेंट की कीमतों में काफी वृद्धि होती जा रही है और एक ग्राम आदमी के लिये यह संभव नहीं है कि वह आसानी से अपने बजट के अन्तर्गत सीमेंट खरीद सके। इसलिये मैं आप के माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि पिछली तिमाही के मुकाबले में जो 3 रुपये से ज्यादा पैकिंग चार्ज में प्रति मी० टन वृद्धि हुई है, वह जो इतनी तेजी से हुई है, इस के क्या कारण हैं ?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: I have drawn the kind attention of the hon. Member to the reasons which I have already given. The reasons are the same. The main reason is the per tonne increase of Rs. 3.78; the per bag increase is 90 paise, out of which six paise have been due to increase in jute prices....

MR. SPEAKER: I think, what the hon. Member meant was something else, and that does not arise out of this Question. The main Question here is about packing charges and not about cement charges. The hon. Minister has already answered that. The hon. Member may now put his second supplementary.

श्री शिव कुमार सिंह ठाकुर : मेरे पहले प्रश्न का जवाब नहीं आया।

MR. SPEAKER: That does not arise out of this Question.

श्री शिव कुमार सिंह ठाकुर : पैकिंग चार्ज से ही यह सम्बन्धित है। अध्यक्ष महोदय: तो पैकिंग चार्ज के लिये पूछिये।

श्री शिव कुमार सिंह ठाकुर : मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या शासन इन पैकिंग चार्ज को कम करने के लिये को उपाय सोच रहा है ?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: The packing charges for cement bags are fixed every quarter as it was done for the current quarter on the 31st December, 1979. The Ministry of Industry had appointed a high level Committee which has worked out a formula on which the cost break-up is worked out for every quarter. For the next quarter again we will do it like that. There are some variables like the one I have already mentioned in my reply to the question, namely, increase in the price of jute; when I say 'increase', whatever would be the price of jute; they will determine this. These are the factors. Secondly, the usage ratio is being progressively improved; from 75 per cent we have come to 80 per cent. In fact, the recommendation of the high level Committee was 100 per cent. All this is being done, the hon. Member would be glad to know, in the interest of the consumer, so that the ultimate product reaching the consumer is the maximum possible and of the best quality.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: I think when the hon. Minister is speaking about the price of jute, he means the jute bags.....

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Hessian is the word.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Not Hessian—the sacking.

May I know from him whether it is not a fact that the prices of these jute bags were put up by the Government itself or by the committee appointed by the Government following representations from the Indian Jute Mills Association? Despite the fact that they are making considerable profit margins at present on sacking, why were the prices raised on these jute bags by the government?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): We take into account the market price of jute and the market

price of jute was going higher and on the basis of the market price....

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Jute bags or raw jute?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Jute goods—Yes. When we talk in relation to bags, it is the jute bags. So the cost of making these jute bags is calculated by the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices. It takes into account the market price, the cost of manufacture and then it arrives at the figure and that is how it has reached this figure.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: The question was: whether it is not a fact that at present on these jute bags the industry is making a considerable profit margin. In view of that why did the government allow them a further increase in the price of jute bags?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: They are not giving to the jute manufacturers. The bags are bought by the various cement mills. They buy them from the market and then they pack it and despatch it to the various areas. Therefore, they have to buy it in the market at the price at which it is available. We have fixed it on the basis of the market price for raw jute and then for conversion into jute bags and so on.

SHRI U. H. PATEL: How many times were the packaging charges increased and to what extent? With the increase in the packaging charges, from 1977 how much did the cement price go up?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: I will give the details of the changes in the jute packaging charges from 1977-78 to 1979-80. If the hon. Member wants, I can read it out or if he so desires, I can place it on the Table of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: That is better.

SHRI U. H. PATEL: I want to know if the cement price goes up

due to the increase in packaging charges or due to the rise in the price of cement. I want to know the difference.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Why The containers are different.

SHRI U. H. PATEL: How much did the packaging price increase from 1977 onwards till to-day? That is only one part of the price you have given.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Why not from 1971?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: The prices in fact available with me at this time are from 1977-78 to the current quarter. If the hon. Member wants, I will read out the figures.

1977-78

	Rs.
April to June	41.77
July to Sept.	41.62
October to Dec.	41.85
Jan. to March	41.63

1978-79

April-June	47.34
July-Sept.	47.35
October-Dec.	47.27
Jan.-March	50.79

1979-80

April-June	52.50
July-Sept.	57.33
Oct.-Dec.	63.16
Jan. to March	46.99

Now the hon. Member must correlate this with the factor known as the ratio of new and second-hand bags. I will read out that also. I tell you that the current quarter is the best in this.

April-June 1977-78	55:45
July-September	53:34
October-December	66:3
January-March	50:50

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Since the fact is that the large business houses like the Birlas, Singhanias and the Jains have jute trading, jute manufacturing as well as the cement plants—all interlocked—and 'Heads I win and tails you lose' is the story with these people, will you kindly tell us on how many occasions did you give the increase? Sir, the jute and jute goods operate in a very fluctuating market depending on various factors like *Pakkas* and *Sattas*.

Will the hon. Minister tell us on how many occasions you have reduced the price of cement because the price of jute sale is below economic price?

(b) What percentage of packing is done by the second-hand jute bags; where there is no market to assess the value, how will you allow the consumers to benefit from the jute bags (*Interruptions*) and how do you ascertain the price of second-hand bags and the fluctuations?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: At one time, as much as fifty per cent of the cement was packed in second-hand jute bags. There were lots of complaints from the consumers and the users that there was a seepage of cement in the second-hand bags as a result of which the quality suffers and the quantity also suffers.

Therefore, progressively the uses of the second-hand bags are reduced. You cannot reduce that overnight because of a sudden rise in prices. Now it is 80 to 20. 20 per cent is the second-hand bags and 80 per cent is the new bags I hope now my friend is satisfied.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: How many times did you find the fluctuations in the price of jute, i.e. in the jute market, the prices of cement bags have been reduced and the consumers had derived the benefit out of that? This is the first part of my question. (*Interruptions*) You have not answered that. On how many occasions and to what extent?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: He cannot be satisfied. We want a notice to find out the correlation between the cement prices and packing prices. The question is related to the prices. We want a notice for that.

MR. SPEAKER: You give a question.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Right now I am giving my question. I have asked him on how many occasions, there are fluctuations (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: This is the Question Hour. This cannot be a question of debate.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU. I am asking a specific question. They are evading.

MR. SPEAKER: You give a fresh notice about that.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: They have collected Rs. 2-1/2 crores from the Jute Lobby.

MR. SPEAKER: That is all right. Next Question—Question No. 123.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Sir, I want your protection. My question is: on how many occasions....

MR. SPEAKER: You should give a notice and I will allow that.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: He can reply this question. On how many occasions the prices of cement....

MR. SPEAKER: I won't allow it. I have called the next Question, Q. No. 123.

Kumari Kamla Kumari. She is not here. Next Question. Q. No. 124.

ग्रखिल भारतीय स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों को एसोसिएशन से ज्ञापन

* 124. श्री रामाबतार शास्त्री : क्या गृह मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि कुछ दिन पूर्व ग्रखिल भारतीय स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों के संगठन की ओर से उन्हें एक प्रतिनिधि मंडल मिला था ;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि उन व्यक्तियों ने उन्हें एक ज्ञापन दिया था ;

(ग) यदि हाँ, तो ज्ञापन की मुख्य मुख्य बातें क्या हैं ; और

(घ) उस पर सरकार की प्रतिक्रिया क्या है ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA):

(a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The All India Freedom Fighters Association in their memorandum has raised the following demands:

(i) Restoration of freedom fighters pension suspended during the Janata Government's regime.

(ii) Statutory recognition of the Freedom Fighters Pension Scheme.

(iii) Renaming the scheme as Samman Pension Scheme.

(iv) Increase of the quantum of pension from Rs. 200/- to Rs. 500/- per month.

(v) Removal of annual income ceiling of Rs. 5000/-.

(vi) Grant of freedom fighters pension free of income tax.

(vii) Recognition of certain mutinies/morchas/movements.

(viii) Grant of pension to underground sufferers on the basis of certificates of national leaders. The above demands are under examination and decision will be taken shortly.

श्री रामाबतार शास्त्री : अध्यक्ष जी, स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों की कुर्बानियों की वजह से ही हम समाज लोग यहां उपस्थित हैं। लेकिन दुख है कि उनकी समस्याओं के प्रति सरकार बहुत दिलचस्पी नहीं रखती। (व्यवधान) मैं बोल रहा हूँ, अगर यह सेनानियों के प्रति ऐसा रवैया अपनायेंगे तो कैसे काम चलेगा।

MR. SPEAKER: Shastri Ji, please address the Chair. I call upon you to please put your supplementary.