

effect from the date of the said notification."

The motion was adopted.

RESOLUTION RE EXPORT DUTY ON GROUND-NUT OIL

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): I beg to move:

"In pursuance of sub-section (2) of Section 4A of the Indian Tariff Act, 1934 (XXXII of 1934), the Lok Sabha hereby approves of the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry No. S.R.O. 2520, dated the 29th July, 1954, by which an export duty of Rs. 350/- per ton of 2,240 lbs. was levied on ground-nut oil with effect from the date of the said notification."

The present motion is in effect to get the approval of the House to a very small quantity of export that has gone out and on which this rate of duty has been levied. Parliament has already sanctioned a levy of a duty of Rs. 300 per ton on ground-nut oil and it is on the Statute Book. This amount of duty is varied from time to time, and the variation on the side of lowering it is made by the executive powers vested in Government. But on this particular occasion, we found that the duty of Rs. 300 would not be enough and therefore, the duty was raised to Rs. 350. Since then, the duty has been lowered to Rs. 225 per ton, which is well within the limits of the statutory duty that is already on the books. So, the approval of this House will in effect amount to an approval of the higher duty levied on the figures that are with me. The figures may be subject to correction. The total quantity of groundnut oil on which this higher duty has been levied is just 997 tons. The lower duty which is well below the level already approved of, came into effect last week. So, I want the House to realise that this is more or less confined to an approval of the higher duty levied on 997 tons or thereabouts.

The history of the position of exports of groundnuts is fairly well known to hon. Members who are interested in groundnuts. We have been permitting export of groundnut oil during the year 1952-53, and I think the quantity released was about 60,000 tons. Out of this, 20,000 tons were released during the period July—December, 1952. A further quantity of 36,000 tons was released in the next half-year—January—June, 1953, keeping in reserve about 4,000 tons for newcomers. But due to the unexpectedly poor crop of groundnuts, coupled with a general rise in the consumption of edible oils in the country, the prices of oils and oil-seeds, especially groundnuts, shot up. By the middle of 1953, the price of groundnut oil reached the highest level attained in recent times. It went up nearly to Rs. 2,000 a ton. In order to help the consumer and with a view to curtailing speculative activity, exports were suspended after August, 1953. That is, nearly half of the quantity on which export duty was to be realised remained unexported. Also, the position in the middle of 1953 was so serious that very many States like Bombay, Saurashtra and some of the North Indian States began clamouring, and that is why we have to take the action to stop further exports. We also took care to see that the people who used groundnut oil for non-edible purposes were given other oil. We lowered the duty on palm oil and people who are using it for non-edible purposes like soap-makers were induced to import palm oil in large quantities. Those imports have come in. All this plus a fairly good crop, brought down the prices. Prices came down to Rs. 1,800, Rs. 1,500, Rs. 1,400 and so on, until the time when we released this notification imposing a duty of Rs. 350 per ton, the price was in the region of Rs. 1,160. Rs. 1,150 in Madras and about Rs. 20 or 30 more in Bombay. The duty was worked out on the basis of the prices ruling in foreign countries at that time. At that time, the prices were in the region of £130 in the European markets. We had allowed for export costs, the containers, the middlemen's profits, etc., and then

[Shri T. T. Krishnamachari]

we found that there was a difference of about Rs. 450. Government felt that a hundred rupees was quite enough for the middlemen, and an export duty of Rs. 350 was imposed. We had also taken care at that time to see that the big exporters who had earned big quotas in the past did not take considerable advantage of this export quantity that was allowed. The export quota is 15 per cent. of previous exports. There is at least one exporter who holds 40 per cent. of the total quota, so much so that if we had envisaged a ten thousand ton export, he would have got 4,000 tons. Following a policy which the Government have been pursuing in regard to castor oil, we put a ceiling of Rs. 400 tons. It was necessary not to lower the ceiling below 400 tons, because oil in bulk quantities could not be shipped at less than 400 tons. So, a person who is entitled to 4,000 tons could only get 400 tons. Though our notional idea of export may be ten to twelve thousand tons, we were able to raise the export quota to about 15 per cent. having in view the fact that about ten or twelve big exporters who, more or less, covered 80 per cent. of the total exports, could only get 400 tons each and not more than that. Fortunately or unfortunately, the prices in world markets started dropping. Nigerian oil started dropping very rapidly, and, as I said though we envisaged an export of 10,000 to 12,000 tons on the basis of past exports actual exports amounted to only to 997 tons, because prices dropped very rapidly. It is with a view to meet the situation that the export duty was lowered by Rs. 125. We feel that with the present prices ruling round about Rs. 1,020, reduction of duty by Rs. 125/- will attract exports, if the foreign price is somewhere about £116 per ton. So, the question whether we ought to export or not, about which we were discussing sometime back, is a thing which is foremost in my mind. In fact, I think I have incurred some odium in certain quarters, having been rather rigid in this matter of allowing

exports. Our last experience has been generally very bitter. Prices rose up to Rs. 2,000 a ton—of an oil which is used by lower middle classes. It is, in effect, somewhere about eight to nine times more than it was in the pre-war days. In the pre-war days, prices of ground-nut oil fluctuated.

Shri Gopala Rao (Gudivada): Is it in 1951 that the prices of oil fluctuated?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I am speaking about last year.

I am speaking about last year. In pre-war days the prices fluctuated between Rs. 200 and Rs. 280 per ton and hon. Members can make their own calculations when the prices went up to Rs. 2,000 per ton. In fact, Sir, I must envisage the position as it happened. For one thing there was a short crop; the second factor was an increase in consumption, which is still continuing. In spite of whatever hon. Members may say, in certain categories there has been an increase in consumption of food-stuffs. There is a certain limit in regard to increase in consumption of cereals. Actually a man cannot eat more rice than what he did. Particularly when you do not have any rationing, the tendency, the propensity, to eat more rice is less than during a ration period. But in regard to sugar and edible oils when there is just a little more money in the hands of people that consume, well the consumption is reflected in these items.

Hon. members here know very well about our increase in consumption of sugar. It is a portfolio that is handled by my hon. colleague the Food and Agriculture Minister. But I can tell the House that when I was in Agra in July 1953 I went to the mandi making enquiries about what was happening. I was told that the normal distribution of sugar in that mandi which was about 30 to 35 tons a week had risen to 80 tons. There is some increase in consumption somewhere and the tendency for consumption of sugar to increase also reflects itself in other

consumable articles like edible oils. So, one of the reasons why prices shot up last year was due not merely to a short crop, but also an increase in consumption.

Last year was a bad year all over the world. The entire world production was about 12½ per cent. short of the world's consumption of oils and fats, which has had its own effects, because in the world position the consumption of oils and fats in regard to industrial articles had dropped to some extent, particularly in the matter of soap where many countries have switched to synthetic detergents. This has appreciably brought down the total consumption of oils and fats in the world. But that is neither here nor there.

Government do remember the experience of last year and having this in view we were very chary of allowing exports for the purpose of earning foreign exchange. Let me tell the House that in regard to oils and oil seeds, excepting perhaps castor oil, niger seeds, and things like that, we have not attained a position of surplus. In so far as the bulk of our oil production is concerned, we have not yet come to a position when we are able to say we have a comfortable surplus.

Estimates have been made by various interested parties. I have got the estimates made by the Adoni Oil Merchants' Association, backed by the Madras Oil Merchants' Association, who show that the present year's end will see a carry-over of 9 lakhs tons of oil. On the other hand, I have the estimates made by other people who show that there will be a surplus of only 2 lakhs 10 thousands tons of oil which is just enough for carry-over and which is very necessary with all the uncertainties of the future crop. So, it does not seem that we are in a position today when we can say: "It is all right; let us release the exports of oil and let us allow the prices to rise."

My hon. friend the Food and Agriculture Minister did mention the fact

that the prices of foodstuffs are coming down and the prices of all other articles which are cultivated have to come down *pari passu*. If the prices of foodstuffs come down and the prices of other articles remain high, there will be a switch-over from foodstuffs to other articles. This he said in reply to a question regarding sugarcane. So, we have to maintain some parity. Today supposing we do concede a price of Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,050 for groundnut oil which will be in the region of four to five times more than what it was during the pre-war days. Hon. Members here were speaking about rice prices. Even in South India with a price at the mandi of Rs. 15 a maund, it is not quite four times the pre-war price. It is less than that. I do not know—I am merely voicing an opinion of my own—if you could reasonably stabilise prices at some where about three to four times the price of pre-war days, I think we ought to be quite happy. The agriculturist will have a fair deal and the consumer should also be satisfied. So, the whole idea here is that we should try to stabilise prices at round about a thousand rupees per ton and allow for a safety valve, so that the prices may be maintained.

11 A.M.

There is yet another factor which goes to indicate that the oil prices might stabilise, if the crop is good and there is a surplus in the country, at about Rs. 1,000 a ton, because our import of palm oil works out to Rs. 978 a ton. If actually the price of groundnut oil comes to that level people will not import palm oil. There are a number of safety factors here; it is not a matter which can be lightly dismissed one way or another by considering the interests of a particular region or a particular set of people, or a particular class of people. Government have to take an overall view of the picture.

I know hon. Members on the other side will now put forward the other side of the picture—I see my hon. friend Dr. Rama Rao's eyes are glistening—it is not that I am too un-

[Shri T. T. Krishnamachari]

aware of it. There has been an agitation going on. Sir, my hon. friend Shri Jagjivan Ram's (the Minister for Communications) revenue has been augmented by cards like this being sent down to us. It is printed in Telugu. The English translation of what is written here is "Allow export of groundnut oil and ensure reasonable prices." My name has been printed—I am very grateful to that person who has done it—with the suffix of 'Garu'—that is a courtesy title. I have been addressed as "T. T. Krishnamachari Garu".

**Mr. Chairman:** What is the meaning of 'Garu'?

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** That is a title. It is a polite way of saying, instead of saying merely 'T. T. Krishnamachari'. But that kind of politeness does not exist in Northern India. Anyway this has been done by somebody, some interested person. These cards have been printed in one press: it goes round to all places, with a three pice stamp affixed to it. I know what value should be attached to it. I have merely bought this as an exhibit to show that pressure tactics are adopted. That is one type of pressure group.

On the other hand I have been getting representations from the Saurashtra Government, who paid very dearly in regard to their popularity because of the high prices of groundnut oil during the last season. They say: "Keep an eye on the thing and do not allow things to go far".

I do suggest, Sir, that what we have done is to stabilise prices at a particular level, taking in view foreign prices. If the prices had dropped before I issued this notification, I would not have brought in this resolution at all, because as I said I am entitled by statute to levy an export duty of Rs. 300 and any thing less. This particular resolution affects only the levy that we have made on 995 tons and the duty has been reduced to Rs. 225.

We are carefully watching the situation. If prices are inclined to go down further, or foreign prices come down, naturally the export duty will be adjusted from time to time. I do not want being reminded about it. It is a matter about which even this Government—I am sorry my hon. friend Mr. More is not here—which he would not approve of, is sometimes alive to the needs of the situation. I can give this assurance to the House that we would not allow the prices to go very much below a thousand unless world prices rocket downwards, in which case we may not be able to do anything. But about that there is no fear. The latest estimate in regard to world production shows that the world production surplus is of a very small quantity. The overall surplus production in the world of oils and fats is expected to be about 350,000 tons. It is a very small quantity and, therefore, I do not see that there is any fear of prices crashing to an extent that the prices will go down below a thousand. If it does there are other means of doing things. As I said if the price goes below a thousand we will stop imports of palm oil and we can use our import machinery for other purposes as well. The price will be maintained round about that; at any rate, Government will endeavour their very best to see that the prices are stabilised at this level I beg to move that this resolution may be passed.

**Mr. Chairman:** Resolution moved:

"In pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 4A of the Indian Tariff Act, 1934 (XXXII of 1934), the Lok Sabha hereby approves of the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, No. S. R. O. 2520, dated the 29th July, 1954, by which an export duty of Rs. 350/- per ton of 2,240 lbs. was levied on ground-nut oil with effect from the date of said notification."

**Shri Ramachandra Reddi (Nellore):** I was a little bit surprised when the

hon. Commerce and Industry Minister spoke in a vein of derision at the agitation that has been tangibly shown to him by way of post cards sent to him.....

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** I would like to assure the hon. Member that there is no derision; it is only a statement of fact.

**Shri Ramachandra Reddi:** In these days of adult franchise, I should think that an agitation of that kind should be welcomed so that the Government may be in a position to understand the feeling that prevails in the country. In fact, the resolution that is placed before the House is not so innocuous as it was sought to be explained by the hon. Minister.

It has got great repercussions on the growers of groundnut.

He has not given us the total quantity of groundnut that is already available—the produce for the year 1953-54—and what probably would be the quantity that will be available from 1954-55 crop. In these circumstances about which we are kept in the dark, it would have been better on the part of the hon. Minister to have given us an overall picture of the existing state of affairs, especially with regard to the grower.

No doubt, the export duty on groundnut has been reduced. No assurance has been given for the export of the surplus of groundnut that is available in the country. In each district, especially in Rayalaseema, lakhs of acres have been cultivated this year and lakhs of tons of groundnut of last year are still available for sale. Having known that there is slump in the price of groundnut and that it has not been easily saleable in the market. Government have evidently come to the conclusion that the export duty must be reduced. But they have taken only one side of the question into consideration and not the other one which is of great importance. They do not seem to have enhanced the quotas fixed for ground-

nut exporters. They have stuck on to old quotas and no attempt seems to have been made to revise or enhance the quotas. When the export quotas are not revised or enhanced, it is impossible that there will be a market for the existing stock of groundnut. In view of the great relationship between groundnut prices and groundnut oil prices, groundnut price should not be forgotten and the facilities for exporting groundnut should not also be given up. I would like to be assured by the hon. Minister that ample opportunities would be given for the grower to sell his produce and that ample opportunity would also be offered to the exporters of groundnut. If it is not sold in the market, I want to know whether Government are coming forward to make purchases at a reasonable price and hand it over to the exporters or see that other means of export directly or indirectly to other countries, where there is a demand, are sought after. Otherwise, reduction in the export duty of groundnut will not help the groundnut growers. Their position is already very bad; probably next year it will be worse. The relationship between groundnut and groundnut oil should not be forgotten. Unless there is a market for the groundnut and unless there is a large demand, there is no possibility of the oil producers purchasing the product from the growers and then exporting it. This sort of reduction in the export duty on groundnut and the enhancement of the export duty on oil does not seem to help growers at all and much less the exporters of oil. I know that in the dollar areas the price of oil has come down and in sterling areas it is being maintained. We are not given any idea of the countries to which this oil is going to be exported and whether the consumption of this oil will be great in those countries and whether the export will be stepped up to these countries. The export duty that is sought to be levied on oil is bound to depress the price of groundnut that the growers would get and, therefore, it is necessary that the Government

[Shri Ramachandra Reddi]

should re-consider the entire position to see that the grower is not affected at the instance of Government. Government has shown generosity with one hand and probably not so much generosity with the other. We are now dealing with the buyers' market; sellers' market has very much dwindled and we have to depend upon the foreign buyers for the export of our oil. To what extent the oil at the higher rate of export duty will be welcomed in those countries which require our produce, has to be explained. To the extent I was able to follow the hon. Minister, he has not given us the details thereof. It is, therefore, necessary that the hon. Minister should take up into greater confidence and tell us to what extent he is going to aid the export of oil that is likely to be surplus. If groundnut export is going to be enhanced, it is welcome, but if it is going to be restricted to the quoted that has already been laid down and if there is no possibility of increasing the quota, the position would be very difficult. We have seen in the Press that some agitation is going on apart from the post cards that the hon. Minister had received. There is a lot of agitation going on in several parts of the country and I hope the matter has been brought to his notice. In view of this, there is an urgent need for the Government to reconsider the position and the enhancement of the export duty on oil does not seem to be necessary at this stage.

Shri Raghavachari (Penukonda): I have listened carefully to the speech, with facts and figures, of the Commerce Minister, and I do not wish to go into those facts and figures at all. For I have from experience found that everybody makes a statement and gives facts and figures which will be very handy and which we can always press into arguments for or against. Just a few moments ago we had an instance, the Prime Minister saying that there is a serious situation of the food position in the country because

of floods, and the Food Minister here saying "everything is all right,—I give you the assurance—that statement is not correct". That is by the way.

I have been concerned with this matter not as an expert businessman or even as a producer on a large scale. But I come from Anantapur district where this groundnut is about the most important cash crop; thousands of acres have gone under this crop in preference to food crops, and we have suffered. That is my individual opinion.

Apart from that, my criticism is this. Of course it is not exactly germane to the point at issue in the resolution which has a limited purpose, namely that the hon. Minister has increased the export quota and under the statute he is asking for our approval. I am not concerned so much with it. But this is an occasion when the policy of the Government regarding the export of groundnut oil, is in issue, and I wish to make one or two observations which have struck me from the criticism I have listened to in the country. It is this, that it is most unfortunate that the handling of this export policy has always been most ill-timed. I have always found that the policy of export is not announced when the agriculturist has harvested and is offering his produce in the market. But it comes at a time when the whole quantity has passed from the hands of the agriculturist or the producer into the hands of the middle-man or the capitalist or the vested interests, and when they agitate Government also listens to the agitation.

The Commerce Minister was saying, "Here I have got a post card, they have spent nine pies". They are prepared to spend nine thousand rupees, nine lakhs of rupees. You know the people interested in this. And you listen to them at a time when it most ill-suits the grower and well suits the capitalist or the agitator. That is the worst feature of the whole situation.

That is what I wish to state plainly before the House.

And now, in this mid-season, this is done. I take it that the Government also concedes that except in some parts of extreme South India, where groundnut crop is now harvested and available, in most parts of mid-India, Hyderabad and Madras and Andhra States this is the season when the fields are under the groundnut crop. It is about a month or a month and a half, old and it is at this time that the export policy is manipulated with a view to accelerate exports. Whom does it benefit? Do we expect the agriculturist to be still holding all the quantity in his hands? It has all gone to the capitalist. He has already purchased it. And the middle man makes profits. He does agitate, he can spend for post cards and for other cards also.

So the real solution is that you must fix a particular quota for export from the country. It may be fairly high. I have read in the papers that the other countries which purchase from us have been making experiments to grow this commodity themselves. And fortunately for India they have failed much moneys have been sunk and they have burnt their fingers. But nevertheless there is the danger that when the export policy of this country does not permit the stuff to go out to the foreign countries, the foreign consumer naturally is compelled either to produce it or to look out for a substitute. If once he meets his needs by a substitute oil, then the whole market that has been built, the whole future of the agriculturist is in danger. And I for one feel that if this policy of export is handled like this, the groundnut grower must seriously suffer at one stage or another.

No doubt the Ministry is concerned with many other considerations and an overall picture of the whole country, not of particular areas. All this, I perfectly concede, is a matter for argument and consideration too.

But the overall picture has always been unfortunately like this. It is not the real man, whose interest we are concerned, to safeguard the ultimately benefits by your policy of manipulations, but others.

Take one of the arguments to which I listened, about the consumption of the oil. This is an oil which the poor man consumes. Naturally they have increased their consumption, and therefore we wanted to retain this oil in the country for people to consume. Is it because you prohibited exports that consumption has increased? I can understand when a thing is cheap, a man who ordinarily would purchase or use two ounces might well afford to use three ounces. Certainly there would be an increase. But is it only to afford this extra oil for consumption to the ordinary man that this policy was conceived? It is an argument. Certainly it is handy. You may say that consumption has increased. Certainly it does increase. I say scientifically your argument is without foundation. But it is likely to be exaggerated and pressed into service when it suits you.

The other point in a matter like this which I wish to state is this. Last time in the inter-session when I went to parts of my constituency, some people, both producers (fairly large scale) as well as the middle-men who have these expellers and other things, met me. They asked me "What is the policy of your Government which is going on?". I had not listened to the Minister, but I told them "I say, the poor man eats the oil; you are middle-men; you have produce in your godown and you want to make it appear as if this is a delicate situation and you want to export; Government's policy will be this." But that was simply an argument. I myself was not satisfied with it.

I only wish that in all these things in regard to the most important commodity which is grown in large parts of our country, the policy must be such that there is a level of prices on

[Shri Raghavachari]

which the grower can depend. Just imagine, they permitted some quota of export a month and half ago. That is just the season when the agriculturist has to purchase groundnut for seeding. When he has to purchase groundnut for seeding, you raise the price.

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** Prices have not risen. On the other hand they have dropped.

**Shri Raghavachari:** Not today. When you opened the export quota, the sudden reaction was an increase in price.

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** As a matter of fact, the increase was just a flutter of ten rupees which dropped immediately. On the other hand the prices have been steadily falling from that time because the world prices have been dropping.

**Shri Raghavachari:** I am only talking of the market and the man affected, with reference to the announcement of the quota and export policy. An agitation was going on, and I remember to have read the Minister himself saying that the matter of export quota was under consideration, with reference to the prices going up. And the season for purchasing the seed does not extend over months. It extends over a few days when the rain has come and before the moisture is out the man must purchase it and put it into the soil. At such a critical time the thing has affected him. Another day, when the groundnuts are grown, the export policy is "no quota". The prices go down. I am only expanding the same point, that the way in which the matter has always been manipulated as some say, or arranged on an overall picture of this country, has not been to the advantage or the benefit of the agriculturist. I am afraid that this kind of policy might seriously endanger the real markets for this crop which is the most important money-producing crop, and therefore I would make a request to

the hon. Minister that the Government's policy should be based upon a particular permanent export quota for the whole country. He no doubt gave some reasons: "I have not given anything to the middleman. I have only given 15 per cent. to each man on his previous year's export quotas." But all these are a group of people who come into the category of exporters only. It may be you have not allowed one big man, but hundred big men have fattened at the cost of the producer. And therefore, my request is that there must be this policy of a definite quota always open at the season when the crop actually comes, so that the agricultural producer may have the benefit of the price.

**Mr. Chairman:** Before I call the next Member, I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Members in general—to no Member in particular—that our rules have laid down and very correctly that the discussion of a resolution "shall be strictly relevant to and within the scope of the resolution". Because I find some of the Members start by saying that they will not so much say anything about this resolution as about the general policy of Government, I would point out to them that while we are discussing a resolution the rule is—which should naturally be observed—that the discussion should be strictly relevant to and within the scope of the resolution, and other points should be avoided. And then probably we may be better able to concentrate our attention on the points involved in this resolution.

With this observation, I would call upon on the hon. Member there.

**Shri Gopala Rao** rose—

**Mr. Chairman:** I have already called the other hon. Member.

**Shri Viswanatha Reddy (Chittoor):** I am very glad that unlike the discussion on the previous resolution, the emphasis in this resolution.....

Mr. Chairman: A little more loudly please.

Shri Viswanatha Reddy: I was saying that unlike in the previous resolution, in this resolution on groundnut oil the emphasis has shifted from the consumer to the grower. My impression in the previous discussion was that the House was too over-solicitous for the consumer. Here I find—I am very glad—that even Shri Raghavachari has supported the view of the grower.

Before I venture to present the view of the groundnut grower, the small grower in the village I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister for Commerce and Industry for reducing the export duty on groundnut oil. The benefit of this will go to the grower.

It has been the experience of the small producer during the past four or five years that when the product was in his hands the prices were very low. The export quotas were not given. The policy was not announced. But, soon after the product left his hands, the policy was announced, the prices shot up and all the benefit went to the middleman. But this year the process was the exact reverse of this. Expecting the announcement of the policy of the Government with regard to export of groundnut oil, the producers held on to their stocks and waited for several months, but the Government, with a foolish consistency, refused to announce any policy at all. Now, when they did announce the export policy, there was a heavy duty on the export of groundnut oil. The result is the prices have not merely fallen, they have simply collapsed. There has been a very precipitous drop in the price of groundnut and the producer does not even get the price that is equivalent to his cost of production of groundnut.

I have worked out from my own personal knowledge and from the figures that I have got from some of

the statistical abstracts available in the Library, the average cost of production of groundnut per acre. I find that the average produce per acre is about 25 maunds. That is, the equivalent in money of that produce is about Rs. 75. Out of this Rs. 75, the cost of seed, the cost of cultivation, transport, storage and the loss due to storage, all this will have to be allowed, and the net profit that the producer derives per acre is about Rs. 15. And in the part of the country where I come from this is the only money crop available to the peasant, and all his expenses—education bills, medical bills and all other expenses—have to be met only from out of the produce of this crop.

Now, I do not know on what basis the hon. Minister says that Rs. 1,000 per ton of groundnut oil is a fair price. I do not know if he has at all considered the cost of production of groundnut per acre. I do not think he has noticed that of late the yield per acre of groundnut has been falling down considerably. The reason for this is not far to seek. There has not been any attempt made by the Government to increase the productivity per acre of groundnut. On the other hand, all impediments are being placed in the way of obtaining a fair price for the producer. Therefore, I submit that at the present level of prices it is absolutely uneconomical for the producer to grow groundnut. I am sure if this state of affairs should continue for some more time, there will be a very steep fall in the acreage under groundnut, and coupled with the increased consumption in the country of groundnut oil, we will be facing a very serious situation with regard to edible oils in this country after one or two years. I am very glad, however, that the hon. Minister has been very considerate to the problems of the producer and he has assured the House already that he will be watching the situation very carefully and whenever there is any necessity to boost up the price even a little, he will certainly do it. But I would submit

[Shri Viswanatha Reddy]

to him that the producers who are still having the stocks in their hands cannot hold on to their stocks much longer, and if the hon. Minister is really interested in giving a little better price to the producers, he must at once announce higher export quota of groundnut oil along with total abolition of the duty, and if that is not possible, I would submit that the duty ought to be reduced at least to a level of Rs. 150 a ton instead of Rs. 225 that is existing now.

Another point which was made by Shri Raghavachari was that at present the Government does not have any machinery to estimate the total crop per year and the consumption in this country per year and the exportable surplus every year. They seem to be working out the figures merely on an empirical basis and just giving some sort of export quota according to some very unsound advice.

Shri Raghavachari: The Dalda factories give them all the figures of consumption.

Shri Viswanatha Reddy: The Dalda factories in the South are in doldrums now. Not one of them is working very efficiently, excepting perhaps Hindustan.

Dr. Jaisoorya: Dalda is working very well.

Shri Viswanatha Reddy: I was explaining how the Government ought to have a machinery to determine correctly as far as possible the crop forecast in regard to groundnuts, the consumption per year and the exportable surplus much before actually the crop is in the market, and then announce the export policy so that the benefit may go directly to the producer instead of to the middleman. As I have already stated, at the present level of price it is not at all possible for the grower to produce groundnuts in future. I would like the hon. Minister to challenge this statement and to prove to the House

that it is possible for the groundnut grower at all to pursue his normal avocation of growing groundnuts.

I have been observing since this morning a certain amount of urban bias with regard to the prices of agricultural commodities. There seems to be a great deal of talk about the consumer's interests. I submit that the real interests of the consumer and the producer are not at all contradictory.

I propose to show how the present policy of trying to rob the producer and giving the benefit to the consumer does not pay in the long run. It is impossible for the producer to accept a lower price in order to benefit the consumer, for any great length of time. He might, because the producer in this country is a dumb person, and he does not agitate as much as the others in urban areas can agitate. For instance, only a few days back we saw how only sixty thousand employees of banks, who were very well-organised, put up such a lot of show, and put up so much of agitation as to bring the Government to its knees. But this problem of the groundnut growers has been there for the past several years, and we do not see any agitation at all. These producers are silently suffering, and nothing is being done to them; just because they do not agitate, everybody feels that there is no problem at all. I, therefore submit that if Government are really interested in giving the groundnut oil to the consumer at a low price, the problem can only be solved by increasing the productivity per acre of groundnut.

For the past five years, I have noticed, particularly in the Rayalseema, that productivity of the area under groundnut has been very much reduced by means of pests and weeds. There is a particular kind of weed which is sapping out the strength in the soil, and thereby the productivity is reduced. But nothing is being done by Government or by any agency to avoid all these impediments to

the production of groundnut. Unless the productivity is increased, the consumers' interests cannot be served by this Government, by merely robbing the producer and giving the benefit to the consumers.

In conclusion, I would like to submit that Government must function not with an urban bias, but with a definite rural bias, so that they have the interests of the producers always at heart, without being over-solicitous about the interests of the consumer, because ultimately the prosperity of the producer is also the prosperity of the consumer. Therefore, I appeal to every section of the House to support Government in whatever efforts they may make to put some more rupees into the pockets of the producers.

**Shri S. S. More:** But what about putting a little more rupees into the pockets of the consumers? Who will do that?

**Shri Gopala Rao:** At the very outset, I want to make it quite clear that the problem of groundnut cannot be mechanically compared with the problem of rice, for the two stand on entirely different footings. Groundnut occupies an important place in our agricultural economy. It is growing in vast areas in our country. There are something like 11 million to 12 million acres under groundnut production, and about 35 lakhs of tons of groundnut are being produced, worth about hundreds of crores, and earning for the state exchequer, crores of exchange every year. So, there is a lot of significance attached to groundnut, and when you take any steps towards the solution of the groundnut problem, you must consider it seriously.

Now, what is the actual position of groundnut at present? According to the information we have, in 1953-54, fortunately or unfortunately, there is a record production in groundnut. According to the figures supplied by the hon. Minister of Food and Agriculture, if they are correct, it is something like 37 lakhs of tons or so. But

this record production has been followed by accumulation of stocks and fall in prices, because unless the increase of production is accompanied by the increase of purchasing power of the people, naturally these problems arise. Since this is not the proper time for dealing with this aspect of the matter I will not dilate on it now. But even when you say there is a surplus, as some of our friends have stated, it is not a real surplus, because if you take the *per capita* total availability of fats and oils, it is only 10.2 lbs. *per annum*, as against the minimum nutritional requirement of 40 lbs. *per person per annum*. So, you can easily imagine the state of affairs. Anyhow, the fact is that there is a big surplus inside the country, whatever the reason may be. And the point is how to dispose of this stock.

Just now, the hon. Minister made it clear, as he has emphasized on many occasions before, that he was having in his mind mainly the interests of the consumers. I would like to know how far it is a fact. We could understand the export being banned, or the export duty being levied in an abnormal ratio, if the internal requirements were in short supply or the prices in the internal markets were abnormal. But that is certainly not the situation today. Is there a scarcity in the internal requirements? According to the figures supplied, there is a surplus this year, over and above the internal consumption. And what is the level of prices? There is a precipitous fall in the price of groundnut for the last one year, which is almost uneconomic to the growers. At the same time, the point to be considered here is that this precipitous fall in the price of groundnut is not being reflected in the price of groundnut oil in the retail market. There is no popular distributing mechanism for groundnut oil in the retail markets, as for instance, in the agricultural labour sectors, the working class areas, or the retail shops which the poor consumers approach.

[Shri Gopala Rao]

There, this price fall is not being reflected.

But, who is benefited by this policy? Generally the export duty is levied to control the internal prices or to ensure the internal requirements of the people. But the position is quite contrary to that now. There is a surplus today. Nobody can say how much surplus there is. That is a point to be considered. Nobody can say that the surplus is 10,000 or 20,000 tons of oil. That is a figure which has to be worked out by Government, and they are expected to have a comprehensive plan of the overall production and consumption in the country, so that whatever surplus stocks are there could be exported to the outside countries, and we could earn a lot of foreign exchange.

But what is the position now? An abnormal rate of export duty has been levied on groundnut oil, which practically amounts to banning the export. What is the result of this control or ban on exports? In my own State, as well as in the other States, the price of groundnut oil has fallen by forty or even fifty per cent. in the last two years. The biggest single consumer of this ground-nut oil is the *vanaspati* industry. As a matter of fact, the only persons to be benefited by this ban on exports, and the consequent reduction in internal prices are mainly the owners of the *vanaspati* industry, and I think, the *vanaspati* industry is mainly owned by the foreign capitalists and if I am correct, by the British capitalists.

Dr. Jaisoorya (Medak): Yes.

Shri Gopala Rao: On the one side, we find that this policy does not benefit the grower, for whom growing of groundnut crops has become uneconomic. On the other side, Government are not interested in the consumer, and no popular distributing mechanism is developing in the country. Moreover, the fall in prices of

groundnut is not reflected in the retail shops. So, the only industry which is benefited by this policy is the *vanaspati* industry, which is not even Indian-owned. Another aspect of this issue is that unfortunately the monopolistic grip of the industry is in the hands of foreign, and particularly British, capitalists.

All the trade agencies, as far as my information goes, are in the hands of British capitalists. That is why here we do not find any reason for this. I put this straight question to the hon. Minister: what is the necessity of levying such a heavy export duty? If you want to preserve and protect the interests of the consumer, you can fix a maximum price for oil for internal consumption. You must have a comprehensive plan as to what are the requirements of the country and what is the capacity of the people for internal consumption. Then you can fix a maximum price for the oil. The maximum price must be fixed taking into consideration the purchasing power of the common man; at the same time, unless you protect the interests of the growers—who are millions of growers—it is not possible to maintain the development of the industry. Then you have also to take into account the foreign exchange that this commodity will earn. Just now the hon. Minister said on the floor of the House that 60,000 tons of groundnut oil were exported last year. Compared to last year, the production this year is 25 per cent. more. That is why you should adopt a policy taking into consideration the interests of the growers, the interests of the consumers, the interests of the State and the foreign exchange that the exchequer will earn. There is one more point to be taken into account. Within a period of five or six weeks, the new crop is expected. If the monsoon is favourable, it will be nearly four million tons; if it is bad, it will be something like three million tons. We are expecting it in the last week

of October or the first week of November. What is the Government's plan for these things? We find that by every step that they take the consumer and the grower are hit on the head. Only a particular section of people, certain individuals, are benefited by every step taken by the Government. In whatever form and how-ever loudly the hon. Minister may say that he is looking after the interests of the consumer, it is not what is actually being done. That is why I say that you should have a comprehensive plan. Take the total production which is expected in the next few weeks, take the present stocks and prepare a plan; fix a maximum price for the oil for internal consumption, and a minimum price for the growers' produce; the surplus stocks must be exported to outside countries. We need not confine ourselves to the British imperialist agencies; wherever we get favourable terms, we can export to those countries. We can look for new markets and see that our commodity is sold on favourable terms, and our agricultural economy is not adversely affected in any way. That is why I propose that the export duty should be reduced at least to a minimum of Rs. 150 per ton. Of course, I have not got the figures to work out a plan: it is only a competent person like the hon. Minister who has the figures who can work out a comprehensive plan.

Shri Tulsidas (Mehsana West): I had no intention to take part in this debate, but looking at the different points of view which different hon. Members have put forward, I think I should mention the position as it is with regard to groundnut oil. It is a commodity the production of which varies from year to year. It has got, to a large extent, to depend on the climate, rain and so forth. It is difficult to evaluate the crop because groundnut is grown in different parts of the country and it begins to move in one part in October and November and in some other parts in December and January. Therefore, it is difficult to evaluate the exact position of

groundnut. Besides, we do not have correct data as regards the crop. Unfortunately, our statistics with regard to agricultural production are meagre and it is difficult to know exactly what the crops are of different commodities therefore, it is difficult to evaluate even the crops.

I would also like to inform the House that of the total crop of groundnuts, exports are to the extent of 2½ to 3 per cent. Therefore, there is not so much of surplus as it is somehow or other felt here. So whatever the export policy of the Government, it reflects on the price structure. That very small percentage of export has a bearing on the price structure of groundnut. Because there is a very small percentage of surplus, if a little more is exported, the price goes up, and if a little less is exported there is always a tendency for the price to fall.

I heard an hon. Member say that the policy should be such that the growers must know beforehand what it is. This year, if I may just illustrate, in the beginning the prices were much higher than what they are today. The prices have dropped, even though export was allowed, because the export duty was put in. Last year, the prices were much lower in the beginning of the season and then they went up. It is a difficult thing and I can appreciate the difficulty of the the hon. the Commerce and Industry Minister with regard to what the export policy should be; it is also difficult for him to follow exactly the effect the export policy will have on the internal price structure. It is very well to say after the event that if the policy had been of this nature, it would have been better for the price structure. I do agree that it would be better for every interest concerned if the policy can be of a long range—year to year—so that everybody knows what the position would be. I do not know whether it would be possible for the hon. Minister to follow that policy because of the difficulties I just pointed out. But if it is possible to formulate a policy

[Shri Tulsidas]

on a long range basis, it would be in the interest of everybody concerned, because people would know exactly what the policy is.

The question of the export policy is also allied with a number of other questions. Formerly, we used to export groundnuts. Then we stopped exporting groundnuts except a very small quantity. Now, we export more oil. There is also the other consideration whether for the oil, we should export the vegetable ghee or the hydrogenated oil. All these things depend not only on the internal factor but also upon external factors. It has also been said that we should not allow so much quantity of this oil or that we must allow more quantity and by allowing more quantity we might perhaps have our prices go up or perhaps by allowing less quantity the prices may go down and things like that.

There is also another factor which has a bearing on this, the world price factor, the world supply and demand and that depends on our prices and the adjustment of export duties. The policy, as I see, is that the maximum benefit of the export price must go to the State and whatever little margin is left should go to the exporters. That has been the policy till now because there has been a seller's market and that is why we could dictate with regard to prices. Now the position has changed completely. In the world it has become a buyers market and therefore it has to be considered whether in the buyer's market we can dictate our prices. As the hon. Commerce Minister pointed out, according to world supply and demand position, there is a very small surplus. Certainly the small surplus or small deficit does account a great deal for the change in prices. The prices go down definitely even if there is a small surplus. The world prices are so high with regard to oils and fats that a slight surplus is bound to bring down the prices. I do feel that the policy must be a long-range one so

that people would know. The hon. Commerce Minister should try to see that such a policy is followed. I know his handicaps; I do not know how he will be able to manage. I am only putting these facts, as I see them, for the information of the House

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** Sir, I did not want to intervene in the debate because I had no new material. But, I just want to correct, if I may be allowed to, the hon. Commerce Minister with regard to last year's crop. If my information is correct, the estimate was wrong—both of the Government and of the Indian Oil Seed Merchants Association—by one-third. But, a certain foreign firm with its vast network had a more correct estimate and they cornered it. So, there was a dog-fight between the Oilseeds Merchants Association and the more powerful firm that cornered it and that raised the prices to figures which we have never known before. After having cornered it, they kept that stock. That was a *vanaspati* concern and therefore raw oil could not go into the market.

The whole problem is this. He says the growers must get some adequate compensation. Here you want to export. The fact is that there is a great margin between the prices at which the forward contracts are entered into and the final prices, which you will have to find a machinery for controlling. It is no use, after the whole thing has been transacted, to bring in an Ordinance as my hon. friend or his predecessor did, that there shall be no forward contract. This is a point which is not worth arguing here.

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** No Ordinance is necessary.

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** But, there was an Ordinance; it was a dead letter because you can always go round it in forward contracts. The point is, the speculator raises the prices and you have got to control it. The producer has to sell it because he is forced to

sell it; he can never know what the price is going to be. Therefore a new machinery has got to be evolved. With regard to the export price, you will naturally have to depend upon the world market. If you want to bring the world market down you will have to do something and if the world market goes up you will have to do something else. It is going to be a vicious circle. Therefore you better think out a *via media*, a machinery whereby that speculator, the Oilseeds Merchants Association does not artificially raise the prices and create a headache for my hon. friend there.

12 Noon.

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think the hon. Members who spoke have been fairly considerate. But, they missed one point, namely, that the position envisaged in the resolution no longer obtains and all that the resolution seeks to do is to get the approval of this House for the high rate of duty that we have levied on 997 tons. In regard to the rest, the matter is a question of policy. The House is always to dictate the policy to the Government and the Government have to take into account whatever the House says.

I think it was appropriate that Dr. Jaisoorya should intervene at the end and, in one sense, in his own inimitable manner he had put the facts before the House, namely, that in a society which is patently acquisitive, in a situation where there are a number of speculators, a number of interested people, the position of Government is not one that is enviable. The fact also remains that ultimately we have to depend upon world prices. But, luckily, Sir, we are not, of course, so helpless at the moment. We have a certain amount of cushion. The cushion, as I understand it today is about Rs. 225 a ton. My anticipation is that that cushion will probably protect us during the current season, the world surplus not being very much—the estimated surplus being about 350,000 tons and to a very large extent that surplus occurs in one country and not

spread all over the world. Thus, the position does not seem to be quite so pessimistic as one might be inclined to take from a judgment of the speeches made on the floor of the House.

I think Mr. Kadijala Gopala Rao mentioned about grower's prices. I think, Mr. Viswanatha Reddy said that the present prices—which we might take roughly as Rs. 1,000 per ton, allowing for variations from place to place, say about Rs. 40 or Rs. 50—is not adequate. I am afraid, I must join issue with the hon. Members that if Rs. 1000 a ton is not adequate, the prices of all the other agricultural products must be recast.

**Shri Viswanatha Reddy:** I submit that at Rs. 1000/- per ton of oil, the grower will get only Rs. 75/- per acre of groundnuts.

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** The produce per acre is different and it differs from place to place and if my hon. friend is taking a particular year, naturally he will be right.

**Shri Viswanatha Reddy:** I said the average figure.

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** Averages are extremely defective. I do not know where he got these averages from. The fact is that Rs. 1000 is a fair enough price and we have been holding to it for a long time. I can give this assurance to this House that with the cushion that we have of Rs. 225/- by way of export duty, I think, I should be able to maintain the price of Rs. 1000/-.

Mr. Raghavachari said that the Government does not act promptly. I think I have read somewhere about Mill saying that the people invoke Government interference most frequently and people condemn government interference most frequently. These two things always happen. When something happens they say government should have interfered earlier and if something goes wrong, government should not have interfered at all. In between these two, Government must

[Shri T. T. Krishnamachari]

be generally not far wrong when they interfere.

But my hon. friend must also not forget that, as I said already, when we take the overall view of the situation, we cannot take into view a particular position of either sowings or reapings as it exists in Anantapur district. It is a grim fact. I think he may be right and I may be right. He may be right in regard to government criticism in so far as conditions obtain in Anantapur. He may not be right in regard to conditions obtaining in Pollachi or about conditions obtaining in East Khandesh or that obtaining in the Saurashtra. Things do vary and actually we are not quite sure of the overall estimate. My hon. friend Kadiala Gopala Rao said it was somewhere about 34 lakhs of tons. I have got, as I said, two estimates, one along with a summer crop going up to 25,00,000 tons and another for a summer crop which comes down another 3,00,000 tons less. Again, the estimates of consumption vary. The net result is that when you have to deal with a set of imponderables, the only type of control that we can exercise is to operate a safety-valve, as I said, of allowing the exports to go out when there is a surplus here and clamping down the controls on exports when the surplus comes down. Often times I have said that Government action might be a little delayed there is a time-lag between realisation of the situation and action, and then you have to call for reports from various parts of the country. Sometime Government action is delayed, I agree, but even so, today with a market operating,—and that is where the market evil comes in because it allows speculators to operate—the market does determine the price. We know that the price of oil in Adoni is Rs. 1020 whereas at Bombay it will be Rs. 1040 and the variations will be due to the question of railway rates. The market conditions, bound as they are by these speculations because you allow the speculators to operate, ensure the grower the same idea of

what he would get. It is not right to picture the grower as a completely ignorant man. The grower may be illiterate. I have no urban bias because the agriculturist is an extremely shrewd man.....

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** When?

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** A long time ago. I have known something about agriculturists myself. I can tell the House that it might choose to paint the agriculturist as an ignorant man who is just being exploited by the other people, but the agriculturist is an extremely shrewd man.....

**Shri Gadgil (Poona Central):** In spite of his shrewdness, he is being exploited.

**Shri S. S. More** rose—

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** My hon. friend the irrepressible Mr. More might think that the agriculturist is being exploited and my hon. friend Mr. Gadgil also says so, but it is not quite so true. I can tell you an experience of mine. When recently I had a tour round some villages, I found that the villager is much better informed of world conditions and what is taking place in the world than the city man. (Some Hon. Members: No). It may be a matter of opinion. The city man has no time to read his paper; he gets up in the morning and goes to work and in the evening he returns so tired that he goes somewhere for recreation. But in a village, normally two or three papers come and there are two or three groups of people sitting and they know everything. It may be that unfortunately the villages that my hon. friends know of are different from those that I know of.

**Shri S. S. More:** Is it a picture of a village in Utopia?

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** I have no idea of forcing down the throat of anybody that the conditions that prevail in South India may be ideal and that the conditions that prevail elsewhere may not be so good. The fact really is that the markets do

operate in such a manner that it sometimes does help the grower to know his price.

To come to a few more facts which my hon. friend Mr. Raghavachari said I have in possession, if foreign prices are about £120, then the price here, at the present rates of duty, would be about Rs. 1210 for bulk shipments, and for shipments in drums it will be Rs. 1150. That means to say that the prices ruling here are about Rs. 1,000 or Rs. 1,050, and the middle man, if he is going to ship in drums, will get about Rs. 100. Actually, I saw a couple of days back an offer from Rangoon to purchase oil at Rs. 1,565 a ton, which works out to £118. Then, it will mean that the margin of difference between the purchase price and the export price for a middleman would be about Rs. 100 a ton. It is not quite so gloomy and bleak as they say, because the prices are somewhere between £118 and 120 and at the present rate of export duty the middleman can get roughly about Rs. 80 to Rs. 100 per ton. I am also told that people who are granted only 5 or 7 tons because of the splitting up of the quotas, will also get Rs. 80 to Rs. 100 per ton. Some hon. Members ask me: Why do you not release more quota? If the price remains like this and if the quota is taken up, then at the end of that period it is for me to announce a further quota. I cannot say at the beginning of the season that the quota shall be 60,000 tons and put myself in the predicament that occurred in 1953. I have to go carefully in this matter and I have to go warily. When I confess that it is a matter in which I have to feel my way through, help to keep stable prices in the country and also to allow surplus to go out through a safety-valve, I can do nothing better. My hon. friend's demand was for reducing the duty of Rs. 225 and Mr. Gopala Rao suggested that Rs. 150 might be a suitable figure. I think at the moment if the present quota is not being taken up, then I would probably reduce the duty. But at this moment, the very talk of a

reduction in the export duty prevents one from utilising the quota, because he thinks that the export duty will come down and he may make another Rs. 70 as profit. This is the thing that hinders the grower from getting what he wants merely because there is an agitation in the country and powerful interests will bring down the export duty. He thinks: "Why should I go on buying now? I can buy later." This speculation does go on.

I know of a very influential person in South India saying that Government is interested in *vanaspati*. Government is interested in *vanaspati* only to the extent of the excise duty that we get. If people will consume groundnut oil and not *vanaspati*, Government is indifferent about it. The Government is no more interested in *vanaspati*.

**Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Gurgaon):** It is Rs. 4 crores and more.

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** It is a very important matter. Otherwise we are not interested in *vanaspati*. At the same time, it happens today that the *vanaspati* factories themselves are selling at a price which, even at the present rate of groundnut oil price, is not economic. These are market trends about which we can say something. I know of many instances of speculation. I know somebody who, in anticipation of getting a quota 25,000 tons in November, sold away 10,000 tons to another; of course, the difference was paid for. Even though we are not interested in this, the speculator will always be there. All that we see is that the speculator does not get the benefit. If it does not go to the producer, some portion of it goes to the exchequer. If I have no export duty and I have only a quota of 10,000 tons, which is all that I can release today, what will happen will be that some intermediary will take away the Rs. 225 benefit. I do suppose hon. Members are interested in seeing that we get that benefit.

At the present time we are using the market mechanism for export and we will try to regulate it to the best

[Shri T. T. Krishnamachari]

of our ability. In the circumstances, I can give the assurance that I will not allow the prices to go down below Rs. 1,000, because I have a cushion and the cushion will be operated for the benefit of the grower. That is all that I can say in this matter.

**Mr. Chairman:** The question is:

"In pursuance of sub-section (2) of Section 4A of the Indian Tariff Act, 1934 (XXXII of 1934), the Lok Sabha hereby approves of the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, No. S. R. O. 2520, dated the 29th July, 1954, by which an export duty of Rs. 350/- per ton of 2,240 lbs. was levied on ground-nut oil with effect from the date of the said notification."

*The motion was adopted.*

#### SPECIAL MARRIAGE BILL—contd.

**Clause 4.—**(Condition relating to solemnization of special marriages)—contd.

**Mr. Chairman:** The House will resume discussion on clause 4 of the Special Marriage Bill. The following amendments were moved on 2nd September, 1954 and discussion on these amendments was not concluded on 3rd September, 1954—60, 61, 108, 109, 182, 227, 229, 294, 62, 112, 183, 30, 295, 2, and 113.

The position is this. With respect to this clause 4, it was discussed for an hour and five minutes on 3rd September, 1954. Before then, on the 2nd of September, it was under discussion for two hours and 22 minutes. That is, this clause has been discussed for about three and a half hours, and I think at the present moment, we are considering amendments to clause, 4, sub-clause (c) particularly. Still, there are certain amendments to sub-clause (c) which are not yet moved.

I think most of the points with respect to this age—which is the main point under discussion under sub-clause (c)—have been considered in all its aspects—biological, economic, and all that. So, unless there is something which somebody wants to add, it is better, in the interests of this legislation, that we do not try to concentrate and devote more time to this question of age; because, after all, it is very difficult to come to any particular decision. If we continue in this strain, probably we shall have to continue for hours more.

**Shri S. S. More (Sholapur):** There is the difficulty of the old and the young.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am not talking of old and young. When one becomes a Member of this House, old or young, he has got the capacity to grasp things in the proper manner. Otherwise, he has no business here. Let us take it a little more seriously and let us make an attempt to get over these amendments at least as early as we can.

**Shri Raghavachari (Penukonda):** I do not wish to take up much time. From the arguments that have been advanced for straying away from a thing that has been recommended by the other House, I am not satisfied that there has been a fair or a clear approach to the matter but only there is an attempt to confuse the issues. One thing that I find is that this Act was meant to afford an opportunity for advanced people, people with reformed ideas and people who are economically independent and have their own judgement—mature judgement—about their course of action for the future. It is only for such people that this Special Marriage Act was intended. In the course of their arguments, Members have been urging that the marriage age in the country should not be high, that this is too old an age, and that therefore more people cannot come under this Act, etc. It was also stated that this was only a permissive legislation, for