

MR. SPEAKER : Order please. It may be asked in a different way. Next question.

**Doubts raised about Rural Electrification Project**

\*956. SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to states :

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the *Hindustan Standard* (Calcutta) dated the 24th April, 1972 under the title "Doubts raised about rural electrification project" ;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto ; and

(c) the exact position in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI B. N. KUREEL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Government of West Bengal have stated that they do not find any reason for the apprehensions in the news item. The West Bengal State Electricity Board is gearing up its activities to achieve the targets.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : A report was published in Calcutta press in which doubts have been expressed about the target set up for electrification of 10,000 villages by the end of 1973. In that connection, I want to know whether it is a fact that to fulfil the target, the West Bengal Electricity Board requires 10,000 metric tonnes of steel along with several thousands of wires and transformers and other apparatus, by 1973, and if so, whether the Government has assured the West Bengal Electricity Board for the supply of these necessary apparatus.

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : I have been in touch with the Chief Minister of West Bengal and have told him that all assistance will be given to the programme of pushing on with the rural electrification schemes. What appeared in the newspaper

is correct because in the first three years, we have done only in 845 villages as against a target of 10,000 villages. From April this year, they have stepped up the electrification programme and 250 villages were electrified; and if this rate of progress is kept up, perhaps 3,000 villages per year could be possible. It should be possible to reach the target, if not by 1973, at least by 1974 end.

SHRI SRMAR GUHA : They say that it will not be possible to fulfil the target by 1973. Is it a fact that the West Bengal Government wanted about Rs. 100 crores for completing the task of rural electrification. I want to know whether this scheme of rural electrification is going to be linked with connecting tubewells and shallow wells and also giving power supply to the small and medium industries in the rural areas ... (*Interruptions*).

DR. K. L. RAO : There have been some suggestions from the Government of West Bengal and both tubewells and shallow wells are supposed to be given connection.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Is it a fact that under the electrification supposed to have been done during the last month in West Bengal, only electric lines have been drawn up to the villages and no connection has been given to any of the private consumers in the villages ?

DR. K. L. RAO : I am not aware of that. Our definition of rural electrification is that it must be used either for light or for pump sets or small scale industries. Unless there is such use, we cannot classify that as an electrified village. The West Bengal Government have informed us that they have electrified about 230 villages in April ; I expect that they must have given power for such use.

भारत माये अफमान प्रतिनिधि मंडल के  
साथ व्यापार सम्बन्धी बातचीत

\*958. डा० लक्ष्मीनारायण पांडेय: क्या  
विदेश व्यापार मंत्री यह बातों की कृपा करेंगे  
कि:

(क) क्या अप्रैल के अन्तिम सप्ताह में उनके और अफगानिस्तान के व्यापारिक प्रतिनिधि मंडल के बीच कोई वार्ता हुई थी; और

(ख) यदि हाँ, तो उसका क्या परिणाम निकला ?

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE (SHRI L. N. MISHRA) : (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### Statement

There have been talks between officials of India and Afghanistan with a view to explain the provisions of the Public Notice issued on March 20, 1972 in regard to imports from and exports to Afghanistan. During the discussions, certain difficulties were also brought to the attention of the officials constituting the Indian side. It has been agreed that these difficulties would be borne in mind when a new Public Notice is issued.

डा० लक्ष्मीनारायण पांडेय: मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूंगा कि जो कठिनाइयाँ बातचीत के दौरान बताई गई हैं, उन के फलस्वरूप क्या आप के निर्यात व्यापार में कुछ बाधाएँ उठ खड़ी हुई हैं? यदि हाँ, तो उन बाधाओं को उन कठिनाइयों को दूर करने के लिये आप ने क्या कदम उठाये हैं ?

श्री एल० एन० मिश्र: बातचीत चल रही है, अफगानिस्तान से फिर डिस्लिगेशन आया हुआ है। इस में कुछ दिक्कतें थीं, हम ने इस बात पर जोर दिया था कि वहाँ से जो चीजें आवें, वे एस. टी. सी. के जरिये अयें। अफ्यस जी, आप जानते हैं कि जो चीजें वहाँ से आती हैं, जैसे बादाम, पिस्ता या सूखे फल, उन की अफगानिस्तान की कीमत और वहाँ की कीमत में 10-12 गुना का अन्तर होता है। इस को रोकने के लिये हम ने सोचा कि यदि एस. टी. सी. के जरिये चीजें लेंगे तो लोगों को सस्ते

दामों पर मिल सकेंगी। लेकिन यह अफगानिस्तान सरकार को मन्जूर नहीं है।

हम आपस में बातचीत कर रहे हैं और कुछ दिनों में बात पक्की हो जायगी। लेकिन अभी इम्पोर्ट या एक्सपोर्ट रूका नहीं है, पुराने तरीके से चल रहा है।

डा० लक्ष्मीनारायण पांडेय: मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या इस के कारण निर्यात व्यापार में कमी आई है? यदि कमी आई है तो कितने प्रतिशत कमी हुई है? जो बातचीत आप करने जा रहे हैं, वह कब तक समाप्त हो जायगी ?

श्री एल० एन० मिश्र: हमारी बातचीत हो चुकी है। आज वह विदेश मंत्री जी से मिलने-वाले हैं, शायद मिल चुके होंगे। आज बात तय हो जायगी।

SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA : In view of the fact that we have got very good trade and cultural relations with Afghanistan, will the hon. Minister tell us if there is any scheme of having joint ventures with the Afghanistan in Government Afghanistan ?

SHRI L. N. MISHRA : Perhaps there are some proposals of joint ventures in industries : but they are not with me at this stage.

#### Supply of Industrial Raw Material by U. S. S. R.

\*959. SHRI K. BALADHANDAY-UTHAM : Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Soviet Union has agreed to help India meet its urgent industrial raw material shortages created by the suspension of US aid ; and

(b) if so, the items of raw material expected to be supplied by Soviet Union and the value thereof ?