

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, April 1, 1977/Chaitra EL, 1899
(Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock*

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

WELCOME TO THE PARLIAMEN- TARY DELEGATION FROM FINLAND

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: At the outset, I have to make announcement.

On behalf of the Speaker, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Hon'ble Members of the House, I have great pleasure in welcoming the Hon'ble Members of the Parliamentary Delegation from Finland who are on a visit to India as our honoured guests. The members of the delegation are:

1. Mr. Kuumo Honkonen, M.P.—
Leader of the delegation.
2. Mr. Ralf Friberg, M.P.
3. Mr. Pertti Salolainen, M.P.
4. Mrs. Terhi Nieminen, M.P.
5. Mr. Heimo Linna, M.P. and
6. Mr. Jaakko Hissa.

The delegation arrived early this morning and will be in India till the 9th April. They are now seated in the Special Box. We wish them a happy and fruitful stay in our country. Through them we convey our greetings and best wishes to the Parliament, Government and the People of Finland.

175 L.S.—1

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMEN- DATIONS OF HATHI COMMITTEE

*1. **SHRI VASANT SATHE:** Will the Minister of **CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS** be pleased to state:

(a) the present stage of implementation of the recommendations of Hathi Committee on Drugs; and

(b) particulars of final decisions taken/proposed to be taken recommendation-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) and (b). The Report of the Committee on Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Industry (Hathi Committee) has been under consideration of the Government. Final decision on the various recommendations made by this Committee shall be taken as soon as possible.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: This Report of the Hathi Committee, as the hon. Minister will be knowing, has been there for quite some time before the Government and we thought that in view of the importance of the recommendation it will be implemented with all earnestness. But so many things have transpired in between and may I particularly invite the attention of the hon. Minister, who is a dynamic person himself, to the recommendation in Chapter V, at page 86 of the Report. Para 4 says:

“Between 1952 and 1965 and even upto 1968 well-know multi-national units and a few Indian units operating in this country received a big impetus to boost their turn over in

the shape of "Permission Letters". 364 of these items were permitted to be manufactured by 15 leading foreign units. Four of these items were bulk drugs and the remaining 360 items were formulations, many of which could have been easily manufactured by the Indian Sector....."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are entitled to supplementary.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: His reply was only that it is under consideration. I am reading this out to invite his attention so that he can give reply in full. This is a short thing.

"The formulations included household remedies, such as formulations containing vitamins and minerals, many of which did not require a doctor's prescription, cough mixtures, ring worm ointments, 'health salts' gripe mixtures, laxative tablets, etc...."

The particular recommendation of the Committee is that these 117 well-known medicines for the common man should be manufactured in India by the Public Sector and also by the Indian Sector. What is the Government's policy regarding this?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: Sir, I had already submitted that the matter is under consideration. So far as this Government is concerned, it is a question of days that we have been here. Shri Sathe would recall, as a Member of the Fifth Lok Sabha and who continues even now, that the shoe is on some one else's leg.

Right now, I can assure him that it will not take as long as the other side took when they were sitting on this side. I can assure him that the whole of the recommendations will receive due consideration. Many of them are unexceptionable.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I thank the hon. Minister for promising to take expeditious action. I would also

like to invite his attention to another important recommendation about having a national drugs authority both for production as well as qualitative control and price control. What is the Government's thinking relating to this? Perhaps, he might not have applied his mind.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: We are intensively thinking on the whole question.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, the hon. Minister is reported to have observed very recently that it is Government's policy to provide medicines for millions. In view of this observation having been made recently by the hon. Minister, may I know from the Government whether some of the recommendations of the Hathi Committee are directly related to taking measures in the matter of translating into action the so called efforts? If so, I want to know whether he is in a position to assure the House that he will take immediate steps for the supply of medicines at cheapest rates to the masses of our country.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: Sir, not a day more than is necessary will be lost in finalising the Government's views on this very important and specific sector of our economy.

SHRI SONU SINGH PATIL: Will the hon. Minister be pleased to state whether the Hathi Committee had declared the permission letters and the C.O.B. licences as without any legal backing? If so, will he be pleased to declare all such activities as illegal? Is it a fact that the C.O.B. licence and permission letters so declared were for the production of the extent of Rs. 184 crores out of the national production of Rs. 450 crores in 1976-77? If this is so, why was this production of non-essential items by the foreign firms allowed? What is the intention of the Government? Is it their intention to stop it?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: As I said, this is a new Government and anything done by the predecessor Government is also under review along with the recommendations of the Hathi Committee. I think it has done a great service in the matter of this particular sector.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: Sir, I would like to know whether it has been the policy and it has been discussed for a long long time, that certain drugs which are commonly required should be produced in bulk and supplied to the consumers at cheap rate. So far, some steps have been taken in regard to what are regarded as lifesaving drugs, which are required by very few people. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether he is in a position to tell us as to what is being done to supply commonly required drugs like aspirin, vitamin and other drugs for children, at as cheap a rate as possible. This can only be done if they are produced in bulk and also if they are produced by the small manufacturers whose overheads are small as compared to the big manufacturers of drugs.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: Sir, the hon. Member being a physician has a good deal of experience and I agree with her that a lot of things should be done. But, I have only asked for a very small reprieve so that we can come out with a total policy in regard to this question.

SHRI NATVARLAL B. PARMAR: I would like to know whether the recommendations of the Hathi Committee have been twisted, diluted and changed by the officials in the interest of the multi-nationals like Pfizer, Sandoz and May & Baker? If so, the details thereof.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: The question of dilution does not arise because the whole thing has not yet been finalised. I can assure the hon. Member that anything that is done by this go-

vernment will not be in the interest of anyone except India.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Is the Minister aware of the fact that a multi-national organisation of drugs, viz., OPPI of Bombay has set-up a very powerful lobby in the Capital with their huge office of a resident representative to stall the recommendations of the Hathi Committee by influencing the officials. If so, what steps have been taken by the government in this regard?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: The greatest guarantee against all these types of activities is my hon. friend, Shri Bosu. So, we need not be afraid of the resident representative.

PURCHASE OF CRANES BY ONGC FROM DEMAG OF GERMANY

*2. **SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Oil and Natural Gas Commission or any other Government Oil Organisation has bought cranes and other items from DEMAG of Germany;

(b) if so, facts thereof; and

(c) who are their representatives/agents in India?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS: (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) to (c). A statement giving the requisite information is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) to (c). The ONGC invited open tenders in 1975 for the purchase of 8 truck-mounted mobile cranes of 40/45 tonne capacity. Since one of the firms reduced its offer after the opening of the tenders, the ONGC held negotiations with all firms who had made technically acceptable offers. The re-