

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Monday, December 18, 1978/
Agrahayana 27, 1900 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Illicit Liquor in "Dry Areas"

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*384 SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO:
SHRI MANORANJAN
BHAKTA;

Will the Minister of EDUCATION,
SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE
be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware
of large scale illicit production and
consumption of liquor in the "dry
areas" of the country; and

(b) if so, what measures have Govern-
ment taken or contemplate to stop
these illicit activities?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION,
SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE
(DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER):

(a) Illicit production of liquor whether
in 'dry areas' or 'wet areas' is a clan-
destine and illegal operation and hence
it is not possible to ascertain the extent
or scale of production and consumption
of such illicit liquor.

(b) All matters relating to produc-
tion, manufacture, possession, trans-
port, purchase and sale of intoxicating
liquors fall within the jurisdiction of
States under Entry 8 of the State List
of VII Schedule of the Constitution and

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the State Governments alone are com-
petent to take suitable measures to stop
the illicit activities under their own
excise and/or prohibition laws.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: This
matter has assumed particular tragic
relevance after the incident which took
place in Delhi the other day. Again and
again such incidents are taking place.
Sometimes, when such incidents took
place, Government has appointed Com-
missions of Enquiry. On such Com-
mission of Enquiry was the Baweja
Commission appointed after a similar
tragedy in Delhi last year. Another
Commission of Enquiry was the Dug-
gal Magisterial Enquiry into the liquor
deaths also in Delhi earlier this year.
These Commissions have recommended
that the only way to control and solve
this problem of illicit liquor is for
the Government themselves to open
shops or to see that cheap and certified
country liquor is provided to the
people. Now, will the Government act
on these recommendations and see that
cheap and certified country liquor is
available to the people in open shops?
The intention of the Government is to
encourage the small-scale industries
and also the cottage industry. Does
this mean that the cottage industry of
illicit liquor should also be encouraged
by the Government?

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER:
In regard to prohibition, the Govern-
ment will try to see that prohibition
is introduced in four years' time.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: So you
are doing it. Now, this is the attitude
of the Government. It is true that
under the Directive Principles, prohibi-
tion can be tackled in a steady
manner, in a manner which causes no
injury to anyone. Now, this four-
years' target is an absolute arbitrar-

ness of the Executive. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if he is prepared to obtain parliamentary sanction by brining a resolution or such other mode of parliamentary sanction to have prohibition introduced in four-years' time, then I can very well say that such a parliamentary sanction will never be obtained because a majority of the Members do occasionally drink once or twice.

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: There is a national sanction for prohibition. At the meeting of the prohibition Council where Ministers of all the States assembled, they have unanimously decided that within four years, this policy will have to be introduced in this country and this was not decided once, namely, in 1977, but also this year, that is, 1978. There is a national sanction.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Just now the hon. Minister has said that it is a State matter. I would like to know from him that in case of Union Territory such as Andaman and Nicobar Islands where illicit distillation is patronised by the Police Department and the Government, what measures are going to be taken to check this activity. The Central Government is directly responsible for the Union Territories. In view of the large number of people having died in Dhanbad and in many other parts of the country due to consumption of illicit liquor whether the Government is thinking to have a national policy so that it can be implemented throughout the country on a uniform basis, by which illicit distillation can also be prevented?

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: sir, as I said, for stopping the illicit and clandestine distillation of liquor, guidelines have already been issued by the Central Government. But human element is involved in this and there is likelihood of deviation. So, it depends on the State Government and also the administrators of the Union Territories to see that the illicit distillation does not take place. But

there cannot be any foolproof method in this just as we have not been able to stop decoits, murders or rapes.

SHRI DHIRENDRANATH BASU: Illicit liquor is a poison. More than 500 people have died in Dhanbad and Asonsol recently. May I know from the hon. Minister what action has so far been taken by the Government to prevent illicit distillation of liquor?

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: Dhanbad tragedy has taken place in a State which is not yet a dry area. It is a wet area. However, actions taken by the Government are closure of all liquor shops in Dhanbad district since 12-12-1978, withdrawal of the licences of all the four country-liquor shops, etc. Chemical analysis of the liquor in all the shops and warehouses is being done by the Excise Chemist and Expert from the Forensic Science Laboratory.

श्री सुचं सुल० पटवारी : मंत्री महोदय ने बताया कि चार साल में सारे देश में मद्यपान बन्द होगा, यह बहुत सुनी की बात है। प्रामाण्य गवर्नमेंट ने कुछ जिलों में मद्यपान बन्द किया है लेकिन भूटान से इल्सीगल मद्य प्रामाण्य में आ रही है। इस को रोकने के लिए सरकार ने क्या योजना बनायी है? बनबाद में जो पांच सौ आधमी मरे उस की तो जांच हो गई लेकिन प्रामाण्य में 255 व्यक्तियों के कंकाल मिले। मद्य बाजार चाय बागान में उन लोगों की मृत्यु हो गई। क्या सरकार इस बात की जांच करायेंगी कि चाय बागान में भूटान से जो इल्सीगल मद्य आती है उस से यह घटना होती है और यह हमारे देश के लिए खतरनाक है?

डा० प्रताप चन्द्र चन्द्र : पटवारी जी ने जो कहा है— यह बात सही है। मैं जब गौहाटी गया था, तो इस तरह की बात मैंने भी सुनी थी। इस लिये इस पर भी जल्द कुछ चर्चा होनी चाहिये।

SHRI RINCHING KHANDU KHRIME: I do not understand how the Government is going to introduce prohibition within 4 years when the brewing of illicit liquor is on a large scale in the country. Mr. Patwary has rightly pointed out that liquor is coming from Bhutan. It has been seen that in the State of Assam, the police department has been very badly patronising brewing of illicit liquor. They are mostly patronising on the borders of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Whether the Government is taking some positive steps to stop these things or not.

**DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUN-
DER:** All these and allied matters were discussed at the Central Prohibition Council meeting and the State Governments have been requested to take adequate measures to stop smuggling of this liquor.

Crisis in Sugar Industry

*385, **SHRI ANNASHEB GOT-
KHINDE:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sugar industry is facing a crisis;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken, in respect of buffer stocking by the Government, reduction in the rate of interest chargeable on the carry over stock realistic fixation of tariff value and excise duty, relief in interest on working capital, export quota and exports, Sampath Committee concessions, export of molasses; modified monthly release system and safeguarding the interests of cane growers so as to protect the sugar industry?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND
IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP
SINGH):** (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b). Due to record production of sugar (about 65 lakh tonnes) and record off-take of sugarcane by the industry (68 million tonnes) in the sugar year 1977-78, the stocks of sugar in the system and its availability have increased posing certain problems in their disposal. However, the removal of controls on prices, distribution and movement of sugar with effect from 16th August, 1978 is expected to stimulate domestic consumption of sugar further and also bring about a better balance between demand for sugarcane and its supply.

(c) 1. *Buffer stocking and modified monthly release system:* These measures were considered by the Government at the time of decontrol of sugar and it was felt that in the initial stages of decontrol it would be advisable to let the market forces have their natural action in order to achieve a reasonable market price. In the light of the working of decontrol these points are being continually examined and a fresh decision may be taken, if found necessary.

2. *Fixation of tariff value and excise duty:* The excise duty for sugar has already been reduced in successive stages. Any further reduction of excise duty and consequent fall in prices would create serious problems to the khandasari and gur industry which are affected even at the present prices.

The tariff value of sugar has also been reduced from Rs. 215 in August, 1978 to Rs. 190 with effect from 1-12-1978.

3. *Export quota and exports:* Out of a quota of 6.5 lakh tonnes allotted to India under the International Sugar Agreement for 1978 a quantity of 4.4 lakh tonnes have already been exported and the exports of remaining quantity have been contracted and are in progress.

4. *Sampath Committee Concessions:* An inter-Ministerial Group has been constituted to revise the scheme, in force from December 1975, to grant incentives to make new factories and expansion projects established at high cost viable, in the light of changed conditions.

5. *Export of Molasses:* The export of molasses has been liberalized by amending the Export Control (Order), 1977. During 1977-78 season, the State Governments have declared a total quantity of 5.14 lakh tonnes as exportable surplus as against which the State Trading Corporation has already exported about 73,000 tonnes. It is hoped that with the decision to place