

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : Yes, Sir.

Legal Notices to Shipping Companies for Recovery of Loan

*247. **SHRI H.M. PATEL :** Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Shipping Development Fund Committee (SDFC) has issued legal notices to shipping companies for the recovery of loan ;

(b) if so, the Shipping Companies that have been served with legal notices and the amount due from them ; and

(c) whether the Shipping Companies have repaid the loan till date ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The names of shipping companies that have been served with legal notices and the amounts due from them are as follows :

1. Indoceanic Shipping Co. Ltd.	Rs. 4.85 crores
2. Seven Sees Transportation Ltd.	Rs. 10.90 crores
3. Damodar Bulk Carriers Ltd.	Rs. 25.86 crores
4. Ratnakar Shipping Co. Ltd.	Rs. 40.97 crores

(c) No, Sir.

SHRI H. M. PATEL : It is well known that the shipping industry has been passing through very difficult times for several years and most of these companies have their working capital, liquid capital, seriously eroded and they are in serious difficulties. That is why the Finance Minister made a statement in the House, but that relates to the acquisition of new ships; thrust this seems to be mainly on that, and a new financial agency is being set up for that. But has

the Government formulated any policy for assisting these companies to whom notices were issued ? I do not know whether you want to take any further action against them or whether you propose to assist them in order to revive them and make it possible for them to start working again, and likewise the industry as a whole. Do you propose to frame any policy to give financial assistance in the shape of working capital apart from the money required for acquiring fresh ships ?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : The hon. Member is very right ; the shipping industry has been in recession. Government is fully aware of the situation. That is why we decided that instead of limiting ourselves to Government resources, we should also open other ways, so that we can have some financial resources to keep the shipping industry alive. All over the world recession is there in the shipping industry. With a great hard work and with investment from the public exchequer to extent possible in this industry, we want to keep this industry floating. And that is why this new institution under the Finance Ministry has been thought of, so that other measures can be augmented to help the shipping industry.

The four shipping companies mentioned in the answer were served with a notice after considering a lot of factors. There are some companies who work hard to sustain, but there are some companies whose financial viability has been going down. These are the four companies, which are in a bad shape, and they did not make any effort to improve. That is why the Department took a decision to serve them with a notice. The hon. Finance Minister took an open house meeting a few days ago and there he has assured all the shipping companies that now that the new institution has come up, we will reconsider their cases and take a final decision. As for the financial package for the shipping industry, considering all these factors, Government is seriously thinking as to which way they can help the shipping industry and shipping companies, but only those companies which are financially viable and have honest intentions about the industry and to keep this industry alive but not those companies which have misused it.

The hon. member would agree with me that there are occasions where some of these people have not even tried to make any efforts to commercialise their industry and to return the exchequer's money. We are still considering the matter and a final package will come soon.

SHRI H.M. PATEL : I am glad that the Minister for Transport has stated that they intend to assist the industry. I presume that the Government have accepted that this industry is very vital for the country's economy. I also accept that your assistance can only be to those units which are viable and which are capable of surviving. I hope that he will also realise that this matter is of great urgency and I want to know whether action will be taken within a matter of days, rather than weeks or months.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Government is fully aware that the shipping industry is also a second line defence and frankly speaking, for the developing countries it is all the more so. Our Government's planning and foresight have brought the shipping industry to a stage where they are competing in the international market. Compared with other countries, our shipping industry is known as one of the reputed shipping industries. On this basis, Government have sincere intentions to help this industry. We are trying our best. I can assure that the Finance Ministry has given a commitment and within eight or nine weeks, we will certainly settle the issue. If the hon. member does not like my saying 'two months', I would put it as nine weeks.

SHRI H.M. PATEL : The matter is even more urgent, Mr. Minister.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Yes. We will put in more efforts.

DR. SUDHIR ROY : Sir, Ratnakar Shipping Company, owned by the Birlas is a habitual defaulter in making payments to seamen. I would like to know from the Minister whether they would take any steps against this firm.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : They had been defaulters and that is why we issued them legal notice. It is public exchequer's money

and we are not concerned who owns the company. About the seamen's payments, I would require a separate notice to give details as to what payments have not been made by the company.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, Mr. Vyas, will you talk about the ship of the desert or ship of the water ?

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS : I will talk about the ship of the water. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to submit to the hon. Minister that the shipping companies also, about whom we are discussing, have made the shipping industry sick by siphoning off their assets. Shipping is an important industry for the country and it should be properly managed. Keeping in view the fraudulent acts with which they make their industry sick and transfer the assets elsewhere and do not pay even the dues of the employees, will the Government nationalise the industry and make the Shipping Corporation a Government of India undertaking so that the trade of the country may be increased more and more ?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the suggestion of the hon. Minister is correct.

AN HON. MEMBER : The suggestion of the hon. Member and not of the hon. Minister.

(*Interruption*.)

[*English*]

Any way, I wish, he becomes a Minister. I always have respect for him because he is elder to me.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : It can be a forecast also.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, some of the companies have, of course, misutilised the funds and we had enacted a Company Act.....

SHRI V. TULSIRAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, that hon. Member is leaving. It is becoming difficult to recognise him. Similarly, the hon. Minister also sometimes comes with a turban and sometimes without it. It becomes difficult to recognise him also.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : What is the necessity for you to recognise me.....
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Tulsiram, you should not have any objection. It is Shri Bairagi who should have the objection.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, some of the companies have misutilised this facility. According to the provisions of the Act, we used to mortgage the ship itself when we advanced loans to the company. There was a lacuna in the Act itself and as a result some ships were not mortgaged. Now the Government is endeavouring that by amending the Act, a provision should be made that ship purchasing company's ship as well as its property should be mortgaged so that it may realise that the Government will not be responsible if it leaves the ship. That company's property will also be mortgaged. The suggestions given by the hon. Members are before us and we are trying to see that how, keeping in view the importance of the ship industry, it can be developed. Presently this industry is passing through the worst recession all over the world.

[English]

SHRI ATISH CHANDRA SINHA : We know that the shipping companies are passing through a recession for the last four years. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, what steps are being thought of to end this recession so that this problem, i.e. the money which is blocked and all these things can be got over ?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, recession certainly is not in the Government's hands, but we are putting out best efforts to help the shipping industries so that they can sustain the recession, i.e. recession in the international companies and in the shipping markets. But we from Government side are

trying to sustain the shipping industries by giving whatever financial support or cargo support that are required by them.

Deaths due to Coronary Diseases

*248. **SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK :** Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the incidence of deaths in India every year due to coronary diseases including high blood pressure ;

(b) the main causes thereof ;

(c) whether Union Government have invited suggestions from experts in medicine or any Committee has been set up to study and report to Government in this regard ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE) : (a) There is no reliable national statistic available about mortality due to coronary and hypertensive diseases.

(b) The identified risk factors for Coronary Heart Diseases are Hypertension, Smoking and abnormalities of Carbohydrate, Lipid and Uric Acid Metabolism. Positive family history of Coronary heart diseases is also a risk factor.

(c) and (d) No specific Committee has been set up by the Government to make recommendations in this respect. However, the Working Group on Non-Communicable Diseases which had been constituted by the Planning Commission prior to the finalisation of the Seventh Five Year Plan had recommended an intervention strategy based on health education, training of peripheral level health workers for early detection and easy availability of drugs.

SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question was regarding the incidents of death in India every year due to coronary diseases. In reply to my Part 'A' of the question, it was said that "there is no