

import duty is 110 per cent for the 2,000 tonnes that we propose to import. This is being imported by the Indian Rare Earths Limited itself. Then, the extra price is being distributed for the entire supply of 13,000 tonnes to the manufacturers so that each manufacturer will have to pay around Rs. 7,400 PMT as against what they are paying (around Rs. 6,300) at the moment. Therefore, by this kind of stock import and distributing the duty portion, even the entire manufactures have considerably reduced—in fact, dramatically reduced—the price which the manufacturer has to pay

We are also considering the question of abolishing the duty for this particular import.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: What are the reasons for under-capacity production?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: The reason for less production has been that we need modernisation of some of the plants at Chavara and Manavalakurichi. We are importing new machinery and modernising the plants. The other reason is the problems connected with OSCOM which are also to be overcome by launching it into action. They have already gone into production. We have overcome some of the problems that have existed. We believe that from next year onwards, the production will considerably increase at OSCOM.

SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA: The Minister has stated that the requirement is 13,000 tonnes and availability is 11,000 tonnes. Only 2,000 tonnes of rutile sand are to be imported. That means, according to him, the shortage is of the order of 15 per cent. May I know why the Indian Rare Earth Ltd. have been allotting since January last only thirty-five per cent of the quota, particularly to small units? What is happening is that the big units are getting hundred per cent of their quota, while the small units are getting only sixty-five per cent. Some small units are involved in export also. These units are being throttled

for want of this raw material, particularly the electrode industries. Will the Government consider giving hundred per cent of the allotted quota at least to the small units? I am told that the duty will be spread over to all the people. But that is not happening. Will you please at least now instruct them to allot to small units hundred per cent of their quota for rutile sand?

SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN: We have had intensive discussions with the small manufacturers of electrodes and they are satisfied by the distribution system that we have introduced. Only in the last few weeks, the Indian Rare Earth Ltd. had direct discussions with their representatives. In fact, they have written to us saying that they are fairly happy with the solution that we have found for the current requirement that they have. It is not true that small scale manufacturers are denied their allocation of rutile sand. That is one of the reason why the Indian Rare Earth Ltd. itself is importing it, stocking it and then distributing to the manufacturers themselves. Some of the small scale manufacturers who are not able to import themselves, would, in such a case, be getting assistance of this undertaking, Indian Rare Earth Ltd.

Demands of the National Federation of Blinds

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*226. SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO:

SHRI SRIHARI RAO:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the demands made by the National Federation of Blinds recently;

(b) whether Government have taken any action on the demands:

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE

MINISTRY OF WELFARE (DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI): (a) A statement is given below.

(b) to (d). Besides 3% reservation through executive orders for the physically handicapped in Group C&D posts out of which 1% is for the blind in Central Government Ministries/Departments and Central Public Sector Undertakings, the Government is considering the question of legislation. A Committee is proposed to be set up for this purpose.

Efforts to fill up the vacancies in Central Government Ministries/Public Sector Undertakings will be intensified. The State Governments are also being requested to take similar action.

The question of reservation in promotions in Group 'C' and 'D' posts and reservation in group 'A' and 'B' post is under consideration of the concerned Ministry.

In order to create awareness about the employment opportunities for the physically handicapped, including the blind, it has been decided to observe a National Employment Week for the handicapped in the first week of October, 1987.

STATEMENT

The National Federation of the Blind, New Delhi, a voluntary organisation, has submitted a 'Charter of demands' to the Government which was discussed with the Federation at a high level meeting where the major demands stressed by them were as follows :

- (1) Legislation to ensure that jobs are given to blind persons both by the Central Government and State Governments.
- (2) Employment to 4000 blind persons registered with the employment exchanges throughout the country within a period of 3 months.
- (3) A special recruitment drive may be undertaken for clearing the backlog.

(4) Reservation in promotions for the blind persons.

(5) Reservation in group 'A' and 'B' posts.

(6) Observance of National Employment Week for the Handicapped to create awareness about the potential of the handicapped persons including the blind, as useful workers.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am happy that the Government has decided to observe a National Employment Week to create awareness about the employment opportunities for the physically handicapped people. The real problem is that both the Government organisations as well as the private organisations are ignoring the executive orders of the Government, with the idea that these people will be of no use in their offices. Will the Government take immediate steps to fill up the vacancies with the required number of physically handicapped people including the blind people for whom one per cent of the posts are reserved, both at the Union level and the State Governments level before 2nd October, the Gandhi Jayanti Day, which also synchronizes with the National Employment Week for the handicapped which the Government proposes to observe? Sir, one example is that the Government of Uttar Pradesh has denied the opportunity to a physically handicapped person who passed the Civil Services Examination in 1982 and only the Supreme Court has to direct that Government to give an opportunity to that man and to take him into the Government service. So, while the conditions are like that, and the Federation of Physically Handicapped People also have asked the Hon. Prime Minister—of course they were 'lathi charged' when they tried to represent that matter will the Government come up with a legislation at the earliest? I would also like to know the likely date by which the Government will come up with a legislation to give effect to this executive order as an Act?

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: Sir, the executive order is there, as I have stated in my answer to the question. Recently the Prime Minister has also written to all the Chief Ministers of the States to implement on priority basis this reservation policy for blind as well as other disabled persons. The Prime Minister has also directed all the Ministries in the Central Government to fulfil the reservation policy effectively. It is not that the Government has got any apathy to all these things. But the thing is that the posts reserved for orthopaedically handicapped persons are much large in number than for the blind persons. We have 1 per cent reservation for blind persons and if we do not get adequate blind person then these posts are filled by physically handicapped and other deaf and dumb people. As we know, the blind persons can be absorbed in so many other jobs where other physically handicapped persons cannot be absorbed. Keeping this point in view, the Ministry of Welfare has created some 416 jobs in different categories and we are trying that at least those backlogs can be fulfilled. For this, we are going to observe National Employment Week during which period this matter will be expedited.

Regarding the Uttar Pradesh instance where one physically handicapped person was denied an opportunity to join the Civil Services, you may please give the same to me in writing and I will take up with the U.P. Government.

SHRI. V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: That was only an example and the Supreme Court has also given the direction, but I wanted to know when the Government will come out with the legislation? My second question is that there are about 9 million blind people in India and around 45 million visually handicapped people. Every year nearly 50,000 children are going blind due to Vitamin-A deficiency. It is learnt that 1 per cent of these are due to malnutrition. Sir, in these circumstances, I would like to know from the Minister as to what more steps Government propose to take in addition to the steps that have

already been taken to provide the pregnant poor mothers as well as poor children (to overcome this malnutrition of Vitamin-A) nutritious meal which include large quantities of Vitamin-A?

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: The question is quite relevant as far as blind people are concerned, that is, about deficiency of Vitamin-A and all these things. But this is a preventive aspect of disease. So, it is thus related to the Health Ministry. As the Hon. Member has drawn the attention of the Government, I think, the Health Ministry will look into this.

SHRI SRIHARI RAO: Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to know from the Minister as to how many handicapped persons including blind people, have so far been absorbed in the Government concerns as well as private organisations? In reply to my question of reservation in the promotion of Grade C and D posts and reservation in Grade A and B posts, you said that, "It is under consideration of the concerned Ministry". I would like to know when are you going to fill up these posts?

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: As per the figures that are available with me, the position with regard to the Ministries/ Departments is as follows. For Group 'C' posts, the total number of posts filled is 6440; posts filled by blind—28 (0.43 per cent); posts filled by deaf—16 (0.24 per cent); and posts filled by orthopaedically handicapped—147 (2.8 per cent). Total reservation for all the disabled is 3 per cent. For Group 'D' posts, the total number of posts filled is 2961; posts filled by blind—25 (0.92 per cent); posts filled by deaf—7 (0.26 per cent); and posts filled by orthopaedically handicapped—160 (5.94 per cent).

In the public sector undertakings for Group 'C', the total number of posts filled is 15,558; posts given to the blind are 15 (0.1 per cent); posts occupied by deaf are 10 (0.64 per cent); and posts given to physically handicapped persons are 144 (0.92 per cent). For Group 'D' the total number of posts filled is 8,210; posts filled by blind—27 (0.3 per cent); posts filled by deaf 38 (0.5

per cent); and posts filled by physically handicapped - 89 (1.1 per cent).

[*Translation*]

SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government of India has formulated certain very good schemes for resettlement of the handicapped persons. Recently, a scheme to open the centre for resettlement of handicapped in each of the district has been formulated. I would like to know from the hon. Minister in how many districts such centres for resettlement of handicapped have been opened and what is their jurisdiction?

[*English*]

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: These District Rehabilitation Centres are opened in about 8 places. In the coming years, 10 more centres will be opened.

Opening of Bank Branches

*229. SHRI N. DENNIS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for delay in the opening of branches of nationalised banks even after the identification of specific areas by the State Governments;

(b) whether the State Governments are informed of such reasons as to enable them once again to satisfy the Reserve Bank of India in regard to the need for opening of branches; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY): (a) to (c). The State Governments, in accordance with the procedure contained under the current Branch Licensing Policy, send to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) the lists of centres for opening new bank branches in their rural and semi-urban areas. The RBI, after scrutiny of such lists, allots the centres found eligible as per the norms laid down in the

Policy. The banks are advised that opening of branches at the allotted centres should be evenly spread over the remaining period of the Policy. The State Government are kept informed of the allotments made out of the lists of centres received from them and any query regarding a particular centre if raised by the State Government is also suitably replied to by the Reserve Bank of India.

SHRI N. DENNIS: Sir, the State Governments have been advised to identify rural areas where banking facilities are not available. But banks are not being opened as per the identification done by the State Governments. Some centres identified by the States are left out. To cite an example, in my native district, Kanyakumari, 10 centres have been identified by the State Government. But so far, no bank branch is established in any of the centres. It is now understood that there are proposals to open the branches only at three centres. The remaining seven centres are left out. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether in all the centres identified by the State Government, branches are going to be opened or not. These centres are identified by the State Government as per the instructions of the Reserve Bank of India. The State Government is also fully convinced about the necessity of bank branches at these centres.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: It is true that in the district of Kanyakumari, only three centres have been allotted the bank branches. Here I want to inform the hon. Member that even though the State Government has identified 10 centres, unfortunately they are not in conformity with the policies of the Reserve Bank of India. So, they were able to allot only three centres. So far as the remaining centres are concerned, R.B.I. has asked the State Government to identify some more places to open these branches. So far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, we have been able to open about 57 branches in these two years.

SHRI N. DENNIS: Regarding opening of