

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

OFFICIAL REPORT

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HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE

Thursday, 27th November, 1952

*The House met at a Quarter to Eleven
of the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

11-45 A.M.

CINEMATOGRAPH (AMENDMENT)
BILL

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting (Dr. Keskar): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Cinematograph Act, 1952.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to amend the Cinematograph Act, 1952."

The motion was adopted.

Dr. Keskar: I introduce the Bill.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER
RE INDUSTRIAL FINANCE
CORPORATION

Mr. Speaker: Then hon. Prime Minister wanted to make a statement?

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): With your permission, I should like to say a few words about a matter that came up before the House yesterday. I was not present then, but my colleagues informed me of it. It

came up when the House was discussing the Industrial Finance Corporation (Amendment) Bill. I understand that some Members of the House desired that the names of the industrial concerns to which the Corporation has advanced loans should be communicated to the House, and my colleague who was in charge of that Bill found some difficulty in doing so, because of the policy thus far pursued in this matter. Indeed only a few days ago, I think on the 7th November, my colleague the hon. Finance Minister in answering a question by an hon. Member of the House as to whether a certain firm had been granted a loan, stated as follows:

"The borrowing concerns are entitled to such secrecy which is customary between a banker and the customer with regard to their banking transactions, and it would not therefore be in the public interest to furnish this information."

Now, I am no expert in regard to the conduct of banks, either from the borrowing or the other point of view. So I tried to bring a fresh layman's mind to bear on this question. The first thing that obviously struck me was this. When we have followed a policy and proceeded on the basis of that and given certain assurances to parties, it would not be fair, regardless of other considerations, for us to go behind those assurances, in so far as they have been given with the consent of the parties concerned.

Secondly, when my hon. colleague the Finance Minister, who is most intimately concerned with this matter and has been following this policy, I should not like without consulting him, to say anything definite about this matter. Nevertheless, I realise completely that there is force in what some hon. Members stated in this House that this matter should be considered fully at

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

a little later stage, when, if I may say so, my colleague the Finance Minister is here. It should be remembered that these firms, first of all, this Industrial Finance Corporation is an autonomous corporation, no doubt, responsible to Government. Normally speaking in regard to an autonomous organisation, Parliament does not interfere in their normal day to day activities. Of course, it can wind them up if necessary, or inquire into any serious misfeasance. That is a different matter, but the very idea of putting up an autonomous organisation is that they should have freedom to carry on their businesses, subject to certain overall policy or control of Government or of Parliament. That is one point.

Secondly, in regard to the firms to whom the money has been lent, I understand that they are public limited companies. Now this relationship is somewhat different on the one hand from the relationship, let us say, of the Damodar Valley Corporation and the Government—the Damodar Valley Corporation is a completely Government organisation—on the other hand, the relationship of the Industrial Finance Corporation which lent the money to these people cannot be equated entirely, as far as I can see, with that of a private banker doing it. So this stands in a third category, and because it is an intermediate category, considerations on the other side can be advanced. And for the moment, I do not like to say anything definite as to what the future policy in regard to this matter should be. But I would submit that we should not like, if any undertakings have been given, assurances given, or policies stated, to go behind them so far as the past is concerned, without consulting the parties concerned, and more especially the hon. Finance Minister when he comes back. And then the future policy can also be considered and laid before the House.

It is not merely question of stating the names of those to whom money has been lent, but the question may arise of putting forward the names of those firms to whom money has not been given or whose applications have been rejected. Now that creates a further difficulty. If we publicise that we have not given money to a particular firm, there may be many reasons, and it may hurt their trading. It may be that we did not think it worthwhile, or whatever the reason may be, it may hurt their trading.

Then again, if we discuss the internal affairs of a public limited company to whom we had given money, I submit that it would not be in keeping with the normal practice of this House that we should go into details of this kind, and various difficulties would arise.

I would submit to the House, that these questions having been raised, we hope to take them up and consider them, when the hon. Finance Minister comes back, and we should consult representatives of the House too at that time and have their views and then inform the House too about this matter.

Secondly, if any Member says that he has information in his possession, which leads him to suspect that something wrong has occurred, we shall very gladly inquire into the matter, if he will place that information before us

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta North-East): May I make a submission, Sir?

Mr. Speaker: Not at this stage. We shall take it up when the Bill comes up for discussion.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: May I submit that in view of the Government's attitude in regard to this matter, it might be advisable to postpone the discussion of this Bill till such time as the hon. Finance Minister returns?

Mr. Speaker: Unfortunately the Bill is not before the House now.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: In that case, I would like to ask, in view of the Industrial Finance Corporation (Amendment) Bill, as well as certain other Bills dealing with the industrial policy of the Government being pending before the House, would Government consider the desirability of allotting a day or more for discussing industrial policy. As a matter of fact, in the course of the discussion of such Bills as the Sugar (Additional Excise Duty) Bill, the hon. Deputy-Speaker actually suggested that it will be a good thing if the House could have a day for discussion on industrial policy, and that in view of all these questions coming up from time to time, it might very well be advisable for the hon. Prime Minister to agree to the allotment of a day or more for the discussion of the basic points of industrial policy.

Shri M. A. Ayyangar (Tirupati): May I clarify my position, Sir. It is never for the Chair, as you know, to suggest that there will be allotted a day for this purpose. It is the business of the Government, to do so, having regard to the views of the Members of the House. All that I said was, when there was a general discussion started on industrial policy, when the sugar cess Bill was being discussed, if the hon. Member was interested in pursuing it up, he might arrange for a separate day. That does not mean that I wanted that a separate day should be given.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: May I say a word, Sir? As the hon. Member has asked me for a day, I am very happy that the House discusses any subject, but it is beyond my capacity to increase the number of days in the year or the month or the number of hours in the day. And we have got not too many days left, we are full up.

On this particular matter that I referred to in my statement, as far as I can see, it has nothing to do with the Bill. It is a separate matter which can be taken up and decided; the question whether information about certain names be given or not does not affect the larger policy of any Bill, or our industrial policy.

FOOD ADULTERATION BILL

Mr. Speaker: The House will now proceed with the further consideration of the motion moved by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur yesterday re Food Adulteration Bill.

I am told that the Mover wants to add the name of the hon. Minister for Agriculture, Dr. P. S. Deshmukh.

Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani (New Delhi): I am glad to have the opportunity to say a few words in support of this Bill. A country like India which is suffering from malnutrition on a very large scale does need a Bill of this nature. How rampant malnutrition is in this country has been admitted more than once, and particularly in the Planning Commission Report I have seen such phrases have occurred. (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker: Order order. Let there be no talk, interfering with the debate.

Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani: In the Planning Commission Report they say:

"There is no doubt that malnutrition occupies a prominent position

in the causation of high infantile, maternal and general mortality rate in India..... Our food deficiencies are a very serious public health problem."

We also know that the expectation of life in India is below 30 and that the death rate is as high as 40. In a country like this, any measure that goes to improve the food position is very welcome and this measure has not come too early. It is an overdue measure because the Bhore Committee Report suggested this measure long ago.

Now, what are the causes of malnutrition? The biggest cause is the shortage of food, then unbalanced diet and thirdly, adulteration. As far as shortage of food is concerned, the problem is very big. It has been before us and the Government is trying to do a lot in order to improve the position. We cannot very easily tackle it, but we are trying dealing with it. As far as unbalanced diet is concerned, we have to educate the people to have proper diet and to make available food-stuffs which would balance the diet. The third is adulteration. This is a problem which we can, I think, more easily tackle. If whatever food is available in the country can be had by the people in unadulterated form at least some percentage of the problem of malnutrition can be tackled. Therefore, I am very happy to welcome this Bill. I myself have seen in intense form cases of malnutrition. For instance, I remember what I had seen in the Kurukshetra Camp where 3 lakhs of people had gathered. We could not supply them with proper food, as a result night blindness and scabies became two of the raging diseases there. (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. hon. Members ought not to talk and interfere with the debate.

Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani: During my travelling in the rural areas in different parts of India, I have come across high malnutrition rates. For instance, when I was touring the rural areas of South India, Madras I came across large numbers of children with white marks on their lips. I thought it was some kind of Leucoderma. But when I asked doctors, I was informed that that was a manifestation of malnutrition. I have seen similar cases in Bihar and Bengal. Therefore, it goes without saying that malnutrition is one of the very big problems that this country has to tackle and we might tackle it, to some extent—to a